

Albright sees 'steady progress' on Middle East peace deal

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States is making "steady progress" towards an Israeli-Palestinian agreement that would unlock the long-stalled Middle East peace process, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said Thursday.

"We are very hopeful that we will be able to move towards an agreement," Albright said, answering questions after a speech at the Carnegie Endowment for Peace, a Washington think tank.

Albright, however, made no prediction as to when she thought an accord providing for an Israeli handover of more West Bank land to the Palestinians might be reached.

The secretary of state was speaking as U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross pursued a mission in the

region to try to narrow Israeli-Palestinian differences. Ross said Thursday he would extend his stay by one day, until Saturday.

Although Palestinians have said Ross has had no success in bringing the sides closer together, Albright said he had made "some progress." She gave no details.

Albright noted that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat would be attending the U.N. General Assembly session in New York next week and she would be meeting them.

She said the format and venue of that meeting, or meetings, had yet to be decided.

Israel and the Palestinians are haggling over a U.S. proposal for Israel to withdraw from another 13 per

cent of the West Bank in return for tougher Palestinian measures to crack down on guerrilla violence.

Although U.S. officials refuse to discuss the details, differences are believed to centre on the nature of the Palestinian security measures and an Israeli demand that some of the land it hands over should be held as a "nature reserve."

In her remarks on Thursday, Albright stressed the role played in Middle East peace efforts by President Bill Clinton, beleaguered by a scandal over a prosecutor's report that he had an affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

"I just have to say that [the Middle East peace process] is a subject that I work on every day, and the president has been deeply involved in, and I think we

all believe, especially the president and I, that we need to move this phase of it to a conclusion," she said.

"It has been long and not easy. Gaps, differences have existed between the parties but I believe that we're making steady progress," she added.

The peace process has been effectively deadlocked since March 1997, when Israel broke ground on a Jewish housing project in east Jerusalem, which Palestinians see as the capital of a future state.

Washington's hope is that if it can broker the pullback deal, talks can then begin to resolve the "final status" of Palestinian self-rule areas and end the long conflict.

U.S. officials say they are awaiting the results of Ross' mission before deciding next moves.



DIPLOMATS BURIED IN IRAN: Scores of Iranian mourners Friday attend the funeral of six Iranian diplomats and an Iranian journalist killed in Afghanistan by the Taliban militia last month (AFP photo)

Khatami to meet with Iranians at U.N.

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — In an unusual move, Iranian President Mohammad Khatami is to meet at the United Nations with a "large group" of Iranians from the United States, a U.N. official said Thursday.

The official told AFP that the Iranian president had reserved a U.N. conference hall, which can contain as many people as the U.N. General Assembly hall, for the meeting at 11.00 a.m. on Sunday.

According to another U.N. source, 800 people are expected to attend the meeting with Khatami, a moderate who is making his first visit to the United States since becoming president in May last year. The U.N. official meanwhile noted that while U.N. member states have been known to request U.N. rooms for meetings with their nationals, he could remember "nothing of this magnitude" in the past.

The main reason for

Khatami's short visit to New York, where he is due to arrive during the weekend, is to address the U.N. General Assembly session on Monday.

He is not scheduled to meet with U.S. officials, but Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi will attend a meeting on Afghanistan along with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Javad Zarif, when asked by AFP to confirm Sunday's meeting, would not give details. "The president will be coming here and he'll have a number of engagements inside the United Nations, including a meeting with some Iranians, and including an address to the General Assembly," Zarif said.

Members of the exile opposition National Council of Resistance plan to demonstrate during Khatami's visit here, notably on Monday to coincide with his General Assembly speech.

Israel frees scientist who spied for Soviets

BEERSHEBA (AFP) — An Israeli expert in bacteriological warfare who was found guilty of passing secrets to the former Soviet Union was released on Friday after serving 15 years in jail.

But Marcus Klingberg, 80, will have to live under permanent surveillance under the terms of a decision handed down by the Beersheba district court on Sept. 3.

The court released Klingberg five years before his 20-year sentence was due to end because of his failing health.

Described as the "most dangerous" spy in Israel's history,

Klingberg was found guilty of using his position as deputy director of the ultra-secret Ness Ziona biology institute near Tel Aviv to pass information about Israel's bacteriological warfare capabilities to Moscow.

Born in Poland, Klingberg served in the Red Army during World War II and, having completed his service, emigrated to Sweden and then to Israel.

According to his daughter Sylvia, quoted by the daily Haaretz, Klingberg was never a communist but was grateful to the Soviet Union for taking

him in during the war.

The other members of his family who stayed behind in their native Warsaw all died at the hands of the Nazis.

The court imposed numerous restrictions on Klingberg's freedom, permitting him to leave his Tel Aviv home for only two hours per day and requiring that he be accompanied at all times by a person approved by the Shin Bet, Israel's internal security service.

In addition, his passport will remain confiscated. Israel waited until 1993 before publicising details of

his sentence and the scientist spent the first 10 years of his sentence in solitary confinement.

The Israeli authorities had opposed repeated requests for parole by Klingberg, claiming the former scientist still holds top secret information that could threaten Israel's security.

But Klingberg's lawyers argued that he was infirm and no longer a danger to the security of the state and only wanted to finish his life with his daughter and granddaughter. Several months ago, Klingberg was granted parole of 36 hours per month.

Israel warns of Hamas kidnap attempts

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli military warned Thursday that soldiers who hitchhike risk being kidnapped by the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas. Channel Two television reported.

The security services have "specific information" about attempts "within the next few days" to abduct several soldiers, the television station said. The Islamic Resistance

Movement (Hamas) is planning to kidnap soldiers to use as bargaining chips to win the release of Palestinian prisoners. 3,500 of whom are being held in Israeli prisons, the television said.

As a safety measure, patrols have been stepped up around places where soldiers usually hitchhike to get a ride home, especially for Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year,

which begins Sunday night.

Special military and civilian units will monitor the usual hitchhiking areas, the television said.

The soldiers have been instructed not to accept rides unless the driver is alone. The soldiers were also told to speak with the driver first to determine whether he is suspicious or speaks Hebrew with an Arabic "accent," the tele-

vision said.

Hamas threatened last week to avenge the killings last Thursday of two leaders of its military wing by Israeli troops near the West Bank city of Hebron.

The Palestinian Islamists have also called for vengeance for death of a Palestinian shot dead by an Israeli settler near the West Bank city of Ramallah.

Polish tests of Israeli missiles scheduled for November

WARSAW (AP) — The first tests of Israeli NTD missiles for the Huzar helicopter on a Polish testing range will be held no later than November, a defence ministry spokesman said Friday.

Polish experts will watch the tests that will be held according to a Polish scenario. Captain Andrzej Adamczyk told the Associated Press.

He said that the tests should begin by November. After choosing the Israeli offer

in October, Poles have been pressing for tests of the prototype missile in Polish weather and environment conditions. If tests are satisfactory, Poland can withdraw from the deal.

Earlier this week, Defence Minister Janusz Onyszkiewicz received a letter from his Israeli counterpart confirming that Israel wants to go ahead with tests.

The government has earmarked 43 million zloty (\$12 million) for

the Huzar project this year and the ministry set up two teams to supervise the sensitive issue of equipping the combat helicopter. Adamczyk said.

Following years of negotiating with several partners, Poland signed an agreement in October that awarded the \$800 million contract to Israel's Rafael and Elbit companies to equip Huzar, in line with NATO requirements. Poland rejected a similar offer from U.S. giant Boeing.

The contract has aroused concern in the West about lack of transparency of procurement procedures in Poland.

Under the deal, Rafael would supply the Huzar with anti-tank NTD missiles and Elbit would provide electronic integrating systems. Both components of the deal still required approval from the two governments.

But the Solidarity government, which took office shortly after the agreement was signed, criti-

cised the handling of the tenders by its ex-communist predecessors and demanded missile tests. It also decided to seek another tender for the integrating system.

A date has not been set for the tender, Adamczyk said.

Poland is scheduled to join NATO in April as one of three former Warsaw Pact countries shifting to the Western military alliance, but must modernise some of its army hardware and training.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Carter calls for Sudan blast probe

ATLANTA (AP) — Former President Jimmy Carter has called for an investigation into whether a Sudanese factory destroyed by U.S. missiles last month actually manufactured possible chemical weapons materials. A technical team should visit Khartoum to inspect the plant and to take samples of soil and building materials, Carter said in a statement Thursday. "If the evidence shows that the Sudanese are guilty, they should be condemned for lying and for contributing to terrorist activities," Carter said. "Otherwise, we should admit our error and make amends to those who have suffered loss or injury." "The credibility of our nation in international circles is being adversely affected by these doubts," Carter said, noting that officials in Britain and Germany have questioned U.S. claims about the factory's purpose.

Assad meets Iranian culture minister

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syrian President Hafez Assad received Iranian Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Asolallah Mohajerani Thursday, the official SANA news agency reported. Their talks focused on "the situation in the region and the growing tension in Afghanistan and around that country and ensuing dangers," SANA said. Mohajerani also met earlier Thursday with Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam to discuss regional security issues. Their meeting covered "the goals of Israel's policy, and relapses of stability and security in the region," the agency said. The two also discussed "the enormous harm done by relations between Turkey and Israel to Islamic nations, including Turkey itself," it said.

Seven killed in central Somalia

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Seven people were killed and nine were wounded in continuing skirmishes in a village near Eldheer district of central Somalia, informed militia sources told AFP on Friday. The sources said that the fighting, between Abgal and Murusade sub-clans, took place on Thursday in a nomadic village 30 kilometres north of Eldheer but subsided on Friday without any formal ceasefire being reached. Supporters of the warring sides, who are also dominant in Mogadishu, confirmed the renewed fighting and have sent in more weapons and equipment, including battlewagons.

Iranian cleric says Clinton a 'sex maniac'

TEHRAN (AFP) — A senior Iranian religious official on Friday branded U.S. President Bill Clinton a sadist and a sex maniac over the sex-and-lies affair involving Monica Lewinsky. "He is a sex maniac and everyone knows it... he is a sexual sadist who claims to lead the world," Ayatollah Ahmad Janati told a crowd of several thousand Iranians attending Friday prayers at Tehran University. Janati, also secretary of Iran's important Constitutional Council, called on President Mohammad Khatami to "denounce America" when he addresses the U.N. General Assembly on Monday. "It is the best place to denounce once again the American Great Satan and its policies in the world," he said.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:10Cartoon Postman Pat
15:30Clowning Around
16:00Drama Neighbours
16:30Doc. Scandi Nature
17:00 French Programme —
"Faut Pas Réver"
18:00Drama Sea Quest
19:00Le Journal
19:15 French Programme —
"L'out de Colomb"
19:30News headlines
19:35 Quiz Show — You Bet
Your Life
19:55Cinema. Cinema
20:30Prism
21:10Drama Sirens
22:40News in English
22:30 Feature film — Love,
Mary
23:29Country Music
00:30End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

03:59Fajr
05:17(Sunrise) Duha
11:29Dhuhr
14:59Asr
17:42Maghreb
19:00Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Moderate summer weather conditions will prevail with clouds appearing at low altitudes, and winds northwesterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min/Max. temp.
Amman18/30
Aqaba25/36
Deserts17/34
Jordan Valley24/36

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 31 Aqaba 35. Humidity readings: Amman 42 per cent, Aqaba 60 per cent.
Following are the highest temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun26
Jerash31
Um Qays30
Madaba30
Petra32
Dead Sea38

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Dr. Arafat Ashhab5602507
Dr. Ayman Muthaseb4875748
Dr. Jamal Jorrah5347351
Firas pharmacy5661912
Al Asema pharmacy4637055
Nairoukh pharmacy4623672
Al Salam pharmacy4636730
Yaoub pharmacy4644945
Shmeisani pharmacy4637660
Najib pharmacy53477632
IRBID:
Dr. Mohammad Shari7100888
Al Quds pharmacy(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Ali Dughani911466
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre4637111
Civil Defence Department5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue4630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777
Fire Brigade4617101
Blood Bank4775121
Highway Police5343402
Traffic Police4896390
Public Security Dept.4630321
Hotel Complaints5605800
Price Complaints5661176
Water & Sewerage Complaints4897467
Amman Municipality Complaints787111

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Abbas Al Hakim485446

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921149
The Islamic Abdi5666131/7
Hussein Medical Centre Tel. 5856856
Luznita4630195
Khalidi Maternity4644281/6
Akileh Maternity4642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity4642302
Malhas, J. Amman4636141
Palestine, Shmeisani5607071
Shmeisani Hospital5669131
University Hospital5353444
Al-Muasher Hospital 5667227/9
Al-Ahli, Abdi5664164/6
Italian, Al-Mutagreen477101/3
Al-Bashir4775111/2
Army, Marka8916111/5
Queen Alia Hospital 5602240/50
Amal Hospital5674155

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44) 52700 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights is obtained on telephone (44) 52700 or (44) 523250.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:10Tehran (RJ)
07:30Damascus (RJ)
08:45New Delhi (RJ)
09:25Beirut (RJ)
09:30Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
09:45Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:00Colombo (RJ)
14:05New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:00Cairo (RJ)
16:30London (RJ)
20:40Madrid (RJ)
21:55Milan, Rome (RJ)
22:30Berlin, Frankfurt (RJ)
00:15Paris (RJ)
04:30Bangkok (RJ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:45Beirut (RJ)
10:45Berlin, Frankfurt (RJ)
11:00Milan, Rome (RJ)
11:40Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:00Geneva, Paris (RJ)
12:15Cairo (RJ)
12:15Brussels (RJ)
13:05London (RJ)
13:45Madrid (RJ)
20:05Riyadh, Doha (RJ)
20:20Bombay (RJ)
20:25Jeddah (RJ)
23:30Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
05:30Aqaba, Paris (add) (RJ)

OTHER FLIGHTS

05:05 London, Damascus (BA)
12:00Riyadh (SV)
13:10 Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
14:05Vienna (OS)
15:25Dubai, Muscat (EK)
17:40Beirut (ME)
18:00Paris (AF)
18:05Frankfurt (LH)
22:35Cairo (MS)
22:40Amsterdam (KL)
00:05 London, Damascus (BA)
01:05Belgrade (JU)
02:00Rome (AZ)

OTHER FLIGHTS

06:35Damascus, London (BA)
13:30Riyadh (SV)
14:00 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
14:50Vienna (OS)
18:00Dubai (ME)
19:00Beirut (EK)
22:40Beirut, Amsterdam (KL)
02:10Belgrade (JU)
03:00Rome (AZ)

18:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport)

22:25 Aqaba (Marka Airport) (RW)

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:45Beirut (RJ)
10:45Berlin, Frankfurt (RJ)
11:00Milan, Rome (RJ)
11:40Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:00Geneva, Paris (RJ)
12:15Cairo (RJ)
12:15Brussels (RJ)
13:05London (RJ)
13:45Madrid (RJ)
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14:00 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
14:50Vienna (OS)
18:00Dubai (ME)
19:00Beirut (EK)
22:40Beirut, Amsterdam (KL)
02:10Belgrade (JU)
03:00Rome (AZ)

ROYAL WINGS (RW)

07:00 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
20:30 Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)

Jordanian-Palestinian committee to discuss boosting trade

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Higher Joint Jordanian-Palestinian Committee convenes today in Amman under the co-chairmanship of Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh and Mahmoud Abbas, secretary general of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, to discuss boosting joint trade and economic relations.

In preparation for today's meeting, Jordanian and Palestinian officials met in Amman Thursday and reviewed the volume of bilateral trade, transport issues and future plans.

Mohammad Halaiah, secretary general of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, and Khalid Islam, economic affairs advisor to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, led their respective teams to the preparatory talks.

Discussion covered prospects for increasing the

volume of goods to be exchanged between the two sides as well as issues related to security, agriculture, transport and other matters.

The Jordanian side requested that the Palestinian National Authority facilitate issuing licences to Palestinian traders to import Jordanian agricultural and food products to the self-rule areas in accordance with an October 1997 trade agreement.

They also discussed the question of replacing the "back-to-back" trading system with a "point-to-point" system and increasing cement exports via the Prince Mohammad Bridge.

Jordan asked that the Palestinian side re-examine tariffs imposed on Jordanian products and permit the entry of refrigerated trucks and containers into the self-rule areas.

The two sides discussed the reconstruction of the King

Hussein Bridge, according to Halaiah, who said the Japanese government will finance this project. A Japanese delegation is due in Amman later this year to present the final designs for the new bridge.

Halaiah said Palestinian and Jordanian officials have reached an agreement on a mechanism to promote trade and increase the number of goods exempt from customs fees.

For his part, Islam expressed hope that the two sides would increase the volume of bilateral trade, noting that the Israelis have been hindering trade between Jordan and Palestine.

He added that he hoped the current level of trade, which amounts to JD12 million, would be doubled soon, noting that the PNA is keen on substituting Israeli goods with Jordanian products.

Journalists say government faces challenge in reconciling information policy, press law

By Amy Henderson

AMMAN — The government's information policy outlined in Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh's policy statement to the Lower House of Parliament received a lukewarm response from media professionals yesterday.

"If the government is able to implement its statements and thoughts, we can have a constructive future," said Jordan Press Association President Seif Sherif. "But we think that amending the law is crucial. We can't leave a law like this to the will of people in office. If there are really good intentions, the law must be changed."

"Under the present law, journalists cannot feel at ease. Things have to be changed legally for us to feel secure," Sherif said.

The prime minister, during his statement, reiterated the government's stated position of a soft implementation of the country's new Press and Publications Law and said the government would be pursuing a "peaceful dialogue" with the entire press body — local, Arab and international press institutions. But the policy statement made no mention of further amendments to the law or of any intention to draft a

new piece of legislation.

The 1998 Press and Publications Law, endorsed by both houses of Parliament and made effective by Royal Decree last month, is the most restrictive legislation on the press ever drafted in the Kingdom. The law has endowed courts with the right to close down newspapers during the investigation and court proceedings of any case filed against a newspaper. The law was drafted under the former government, which many journalists said had drafted the law to suit its own specific objectives.

Tarawneh on Thursday said His Majesty King Hussein's letter of designation required that efforts to develop the media be "stepped up in accordance with the age of instant communication and dynamic media, transparency, objectivity, openness and credibility."

"[Such a] media reflects upon the nation's achievements, its reality, its democracy and its political pluralism," the prime minister said.

Upon its appointment, the Tarawneh government promised a new "détente" in its relationship with the press, and has made several promising gestures.

Judeh recently said the government was working out a formula for a Royal Commission on the press to study press-related matters. Journalists hope that the outcome of a commission would be the creation of a neutral body to investigate complaints against and from the media before cases are moved to the courts. Judeh also said the government was entertaining a request to drop charges against newspapers filed under previous governments.

Last week, the former director of the Press and Publications Department was replaced by Iyad Qatan, a former columnist and human rights activist. Journalists said the decision to replace the former director, who they hold responsible for some of the law's most restrictive articles, was a "signal" of the government's seriousness in creating a more relaxed atmosphere.

However, many have said that "the law is the law" and the government is obliged by the Constitution to uphold it.

"There is a contradiction in what the government says," said a correspondent for a foreign Arabic daily. "There is a law, and the government cannot just selectively implement the law. To do otherwise is to undermine the rule of law."

Another journalist yesterday said a recent case filed against Al Hadath Chief Editor Nidal Mansour was inconsistent with the government's prior statements.

Mansour yesterday told the Jordan Times that the Information Ministry filed a case against him for an article entitled "Our democracy and American democracy" published in the weekly on Aug. 20, before the new press law went into effect. The article referred generally to alleged corruption in the government and Parliament, but refrained from naming specific officials and deputies.

"This is a test to see how serious the government is about implementing good intentions and flexibility in dealing with the press and applying the law," Mansour said.

Judeh yesterday said he had only been made aware of the case after Mansour pointed it out to him and that he was still unaware of the full details, and therefore not prepared to comment.

The minister said that the government had considered the JPA's request to drop charges against newspapers, but that "99 per cent of the charges against newspapers are now before the judiciary,

which is independent."

"If we want to respect the judiciary, [the government] cannot just tell the judiciary to start dropping cases," he said. "We were very clear about this point from the beginning."

Sherif said that he had not been informed of the case, but that if such a case was pending, it would be a "very explosive" development.

Meanwhile, JPA sources yesterday said they will convene a special meeting today to discuss whether or not one of their board members had "normalised" relations with Israelis at a recent conference on democracy in Greece.

JPA sources told the Jordan Times that some members of the press organisation have alleged that Jamal Shawahin, chief editor of Al Bilad weekly and a JPA board member, attended the conference knowing that there would be Israelis present.

Jordan's 13 professional associations are adamantly opposed to normalisation of ties with the Jewish state and include in their by-laws articles that prohibit their members from doing so on threat of expulsion from the syndicates to which they are legally bound to join before practising their professions.

Government bans protest rallies against Hamas members' killings

By Tareq Ayyoub

BAQA'A CAMP — The government on Friday banned two rallies in the Kingdom's largest refugee camps to protest the killing of two Hamas activists in the West Bank by Israeli security agents on Sept. 10.

Mohammad Oweidah, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, which planned the rallies in Al Baqa'a and Al Wihdat camps, said the government reversed its initial approval of the two processions.

Oweidah, a former member of Parliament, told the Jordan Times that Interior Minister Nayef Qadi gave the group "verbal" consent to hold the rallies but informed them later that the Cabinet recommended denying the permits.

"We told the minister that the rallies would be peaceful, but he said the government was afraid that disturbances might take place and felt it would be better to cancel them," Oweidah said.

Qadi told the Jordan

Times that the ministry received no written request from the Brotherhood and that there was no approval granted to hold the rallies.

The minister said that during a meeting with Brotherhood leader Abdul Majed Thuneibat and Islamic Action Front Secretary General Abdul Latif Arabiyat last week, he informed them that the time was not "suitable" for such rallies.

"We told them that holding such rallies might affect the security and stability of the country and cause some disturbances which we do not need at this time," Qadi said.

Oweidah said the rallies were aimed at showing support for Hamas and denouncing the killing of Emad and Adel Awadallah.

Following the killing of the Awadallah brothers, Israel claimed that they were behind suicide bombings in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

On Friday, police were stationed at roads leading to the mosque where the Wih-

dat camp rally participants were to assemble, eyewitnesses said.

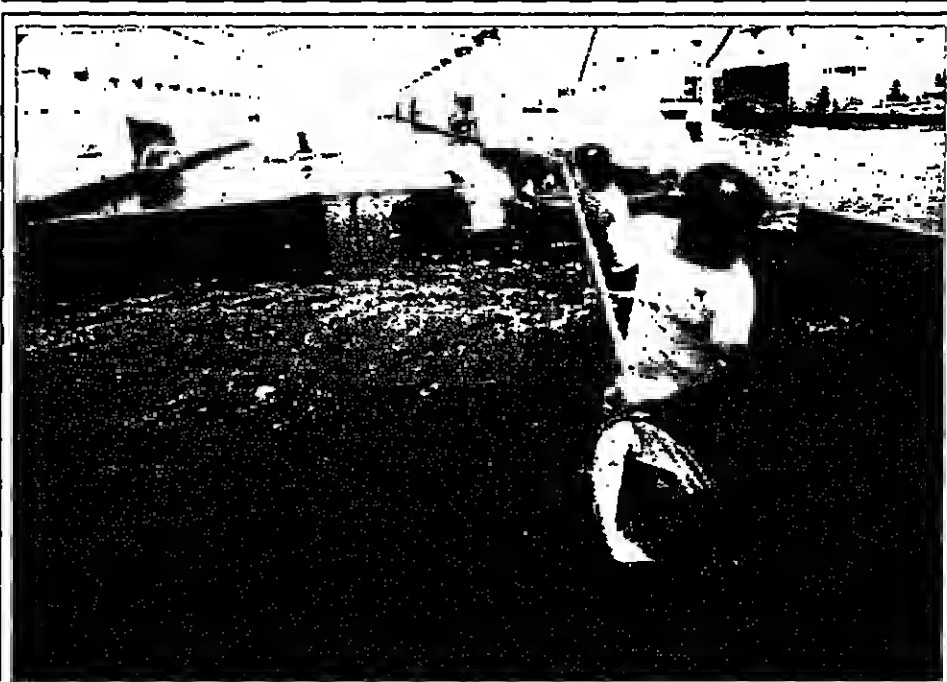
Police also watched prayers at Nablus Mosque in Baqa'a.

Brotherhood leaders addressed worshippers at both mosques and urged Hamas to avenge the killing of the two brothers, who were considered the top leaders of Hamas' military arm, the Izzedin Qassam Brigade.

They also called for jihad (holy war) against Israel to "liberate Jerusalem" and the Palestinian territories and urged the Palestinian National Authority to put an end to its security cooperation with Israel and to assist Hamas in its "war" against Israel.

The speeches were interrupted by cries from Brotherhood supporters such as "Revolution until victory," "Oh Jews, the army of Muhammad will return," and "God is great."

Following the prayers, worshippers dispersed peacefully.



CATCH OF THE DAY: Workers use nets at a fish farm in the Jordan Valley to catch fish for sale on the local market (Photo by Yousef 'Allan)

Court drops death sentences against eight convicted of murder

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Criminal Court has dropped death sentences against eight people from the same family who were sentenced to death in November 1997 for bludgeoning a man and his son to death during a brawl in the Wadi Seer area in October 1993.

After the Court of Cassation ordered a retrial, the Criminal Court amended its previous ruling of premeditated murder to manslaughter against Ahmad Mohammad, 27, Ahmad Salim, 24, Yasser Mohammad, 20, Sa'id Mahmoud, 24, Eld Mohammad, 29, Mohammad Khalil, 60, Mahmoud Khalil, 55, and Mifid Khalil, 70. All were sentenced to 22-and-one-half years in prison with hard labour.

The eight were sentenced to death by the Criminal Court in October 1997 for the premeditated murder of Salim Salameh, 49, and his 20-year-old son, Jamil, on Oct. 20, 1993.

Six months later, the Court of Cassation overturned the verdict and returned the case to the Criminal Court for retrial because it said "not all eight defendants participated in the murder."

In April, the Criminal Court upheld its ruling.

The case was referred to

the Court of Cassation a second time, and the nine-judge tribunal overturned the ruling once more. The case was returned to the Criminal Court, which was asked to amend the charges from premeditated murder to manslaughter.

According to court transcripts, the defendants had several quarrels with the victims and their family four months prior to the incident over a piece of land in the Iraq Al Amir area in Wadi Seer.

The Criminal Court stated that the eight defendants met on Oct. 19, one day before the incident, and planned to lure the two victims to a garage.

On the evening of the murder, the court maintained, the defendants asked the two victims to meet with them to discuss their feud.

"When the two victims arrived, the defendants surrounded them and beat them with rocks and wooden sticks until they died," the court said.

The court quoted defendant Mahmoud Khalil as testifying that his family decided to exact revenge from the victim's family because of the continuous fights, "and because he couldn't forgive them for the harm caused to his teeth by Jamil Salim in a previous fight."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Humanitarian flight to Bangladesh

AMMAN (Petra) — Upon directives from HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, the Hashemite Charity Organisation Friday sent an aircraft loaded with medical and food stuff to Bangladesh, which has been hit by floods over the last two months.

Queen to attend UNESCO ceremony

BONN (Petra) — Her Majesty Queen Noor will attend a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation ceremony near Bonn later this month. The proceeds of the ceremony will go to needy children throughout the world.

German bank opens regional office

AMMAN (J.T.) — The German Development Bank has opened a regional office at the premises of the German Technical Cooperation centre in Shmeisani. The bank finances social, economic and industrial projects in Third World countries as well as projects to protect the environment and natural resources. In an address at the inauguration ceremony, Planning Minister Nabil Aramari expressed the government's appreciation of Germany's continued assistance to the Kingdom, particularly in water and infrastructure projects. Ammanari said a total of JD750 million in German aid has been awarded to Jordan since 1961.

New Qatari ambassador arrives

AMMAN (Petra) — Qatar's ambassador designate to Jordan, Sheikh Fahed Ben Jasssem Ben Abdullah Al Thani, arrived in Amman Thursday evening to take up his new post. Sheikh Fahed, who was met at the airport by senior Foreign Ministry officials, expressed determination to dedicate his efforts to serve the mutual interests of Jordan and Qatar. Sheikh Fahed succeeds Nasser Ben Abdul Aziz Al Nasser, who was transferred to New York to serve as Qatar's permanent ambassador to the U.N.

WHAT'S GOING ON

PUPPET SHOW
* Children's puppet show "Said wal Bolbol" (Said and the Bird) at the Royal Cultural Centre on Sunday Sept. 20 at 6:30 p.m.

TUNISIAN FILM FESTIVAL
* "Azzah" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS
* Display of Bani Hamida and Jordan River Designs products (rugs, cushions, wall-hangings, and quilts) at the Jordan River Designs showroom, until Sept. 30 (Tel. 4613081).

* Photography exhibition entitled "Les Cites d'Artistes a Paris" at the premises of the Association of the Jordanian Plastic Artists, Jabal Weibdeh, until Sept. 30.

* Paintings by Iraqi artists Ismail Sheikhly, Suzanne Sheikhly, and Khalid Qassab entitled "Pioneers of the Fifties" at Orfall Art Gallery, Umm Utheina, until Sept. 21 (Tel. 5526932).

* Paintings by Rula Shukairy at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Amman, until Sept. 30.

Fire at Al Ra'i newspaper under investigation

By a Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A special committee is investigating the cause of a fire that broke out at a paper warehouse on the premises of Al Ra'i newspaper on Thursday.

The committee is expected to report on the cause of fire, which destroyed tonnes of printing paper.

The fire started at around 5:30 p.m. on Thursday. Staff at Al Ra'i saw smoke coming out of the windows of a 250-metre paper storeroom and alerted the Civil Defence Department.

It took CDD firefighters in addition to Al Ra'i employees

and Amman Greater Municipality employees almost three hours to extinguish the blaze.

The fire destroyed a six-metre area where tonnes of commercial paper were stacked. The blaze also damaged two rooms that were located behind the storage room.

Five Al Ra'i employees were hospitalised for smoke inhalation. They were all discharged later Thursday from the hospital.

Al Ra'i employees and Amman Greater Municipality employees helped in removing raw material and paper from the burning warehouse.

His Majesty King Hussein,

who is currently receiving treatment at the Mayo Clinic in the U.S., called the chairman of the Board of Directors of the Jordan Press Foundation, Abdul Salam Tarawneh, to inquire about the fire. The King also called the CDD to check on the progress of the firefighting operation.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, also called Tarawneh and was in constant contact with the CDD operation room following up on the operation.

Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, Interior Minister Nayef Qadi, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Minister of Administrative Develop-

ment Bassam Emoush and Information Minister Nasser Judeh supervised the operation.

Lung, breast cancer most prevalent in Jordan — report

By Suha Ma'ayeh

AMMAN — Statistics from Jordan's Cancer Registry revealed that in 1996, lung and bladder cancer as well as leukaemia were the most prevalent forms of the disease in males, while breast and colon-rectal cancer and leukaemia were hit females the most.

Of the 3,302 new cancer cases (1,704 males and 1,598 females, including children) registered in 1996, 198 proved fatal by the end of 1997.

The registry, established at the Health Ministry in 1996, recorded that the incidence rate of leukaemia among children below 10 was the highest, with 53 male cases and 33 female cases, followed by brain tumours, 21 and 15, respectively.

According to registry statistics, the 1996 incidence rate of all cancers among Jordanians was 74.3 cases per 100,000 persons.

Divided according to sex, the incidence rate calculated to 73.5 cases for males and 75.3 cases for females per 100,000.

Figures showed that lung cancer among males was the most common form of the disease, with 185 reported cases, or 10.8 per cent of the total number of male cases. Bladder cancer and leukaemia followed with 168 (9.8 per cent) and 158 cases (9.3 per cent).

Of the 1,598 females registered, 455 were diagnosed as having breast cancer. Breast cancer comprised 28.5 per cent of the cancer cases among females.

Colon-rectal cancer and leukaemia among females numbered 111 and 109 cases.

Other types of cancer recorded among males were colon/rectal, 123, skin, 115, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, 102, and prostate, 89.

Males were also hit by brain cancer, 88 cases, stomach cancer, 79, and cancer of the larynx, 61.

Among women, skin cancer, 82 cases, brain tumours, 81, thyroid, 77, and non-Hodgkin lymphoma, 74, were reported.

The types with the lowest incidence among women were uterine, 70 cases, Hodgkin lymphoma, 54, and ovarian, 53, cancer.

The Cancer Registry compared its figures with those of the U.S., a developed country, and Egypt, a developing country, to determine where Jordan stands.

The rate of incidence of cancer in the U.S. was 300 per 100,000 people compared to 74.3 per 100,000 in Jordan.

The incidence of leukaemia among males and females in Egypt was 4.9 per cent and 2.9 per cent, respectively, while in the U.S. it was 2.6 per cent and

2.2 per cent. In Jordan, the leukaemia incidence rate was nearly triple that of the U.S., with 9.3 per cent in males and 6.8 per cent in females.

The incidence rate of skin cancer in Jordan reached 6.7 per cent among males and 5.1 per cent among females, compared to 2.1 per cent and 1.4 per cent in Egypt and 2.7 per cent and 2.6 per cent in U.S.

Brain tumours diagnosed in both males and females in Jordan (5.2 per cent and 5.1 per cent) were also higher than the corresponding incidence in American males and females (1.5 per cent and 1.4 per cent).

Meanwhile, lung cancer in Jordan, estimated at 10.8 per cent among males, is less prevalent than it is in the U.S., which reported an incidence rate of 15.3 per cent. Egypt registered 2.2 per cent.

The registry also showed that 11.2 per cent of all cancer cases occurred before the age of 20, while 34.9 per cent occurred after the age of 60.

The Cancer Registry collects data from all health sectors in the country. It also analyses data and removes duplicated records.

In its continuous reporting system, the registry also follows up on all the reported cases of cancer across the Kingdom.

Man executed for botched 'honour' killing

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — A 24-year-old man who murdered his wife on suspicion that she was "behaving immorally" was hanged Thursday at dawn, officials said Friday.

Mohammad Salman, a soldier, confessed to interrogators that he strangled his wife on suspicion that she was involved in an illicit relationship. No dates were provided by officials for the murder or the sentencing.

Salman was quoted minutes before his execution as saying that "I killed my wife but she was innocent. I was ignorant. I urge my relatives to cleanse my wife's reputation. God bless her soul."

Human rights groups are concerned that crimes of honour continue to be a problem in Jordan.

According to officials, out of 25 women killed in the Kingdom last year in "hon-

our crimes," investigations proved that 95 per cent of them were innocent of any immoral allegations by their relatives.

Salman, who was executed at Swaqa Prison, asked to see two of his cousins before he was hanged.

Salman died instantly, but it took 15 minutes for all bodily functions to cease, according to one official who attended the execution.

The hanging was attended by centre Director Sa'id Ajrami, the prosecutor general, the centre's mufti, pathologist Awad Tarawneh and other officials.

Thursday's execution was the second to be carried out in the Kingdom this year. On Aug. 14, a 35-year-old man was put to death after he was found guilty of murdering a couple and their son in Amman in 1997.

Last year, 11 people were executed in the Kingdom for various crimes.

of six Iranian diplomats photo)

BRIEF

last probe

ident Jimmy Carter has called Sudanese leader, who is reportedly manufacturing possible deal to turn Sudan into a Muslim state. Carter said the deal should be rejected and that the Sudan should be a free country. Carter also said that the deal would be a "disaster" for the Sudan and that it would be a "disaster" for the world.

ture minister

President of the United States, James M. Carter, said that the deal would be a "disaster" for the Sudan and that it would be a "disaster" for the world. Carter also said that the deal would be a "disaster" for the Sudan and that it would be a "disaster" for the world.

Somalia

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18:00 ...
22:25 ...

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian: Kh. Faleh
05:45 ...
10:45 ...
11:00 ...
11:40 ...
12:00 ...
12:15 ...
12:15 ...
13:05 ...
13:45 ...
20:05 ...
20:20 ...
20:25 ...
23:30 ...
05:30 ...

Other Flights
06:35 ...
13:30 ...
14:00 ...
14:50 ...
18:00 ...
19:00 ...
23:40 ...
02:10 ...
03:00 ...

Royal Wings (RW)
07:00 ...
08:30 ...
20:30 ...

Ryzhkov turns down Russian cabinet post

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian centrist lawmaker Vladimir Ryzhkov Friday officially turned down the post of deputy prime minister in charge of social affairs, two days after being named by Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov.

"My agreement (to the nomination) in such a situation would be reckless," Ryzhkov told reporters after holding consultations with Primakov. "I cannot take on such a responsibility."

Ryzhkov, 32, was one of three members from the centrist Our Home Is Russia (NDR) faction assigned as a deputy prime minister this week.

A first deputy speaker in Russia's parliament, Ryzhkov said he spent three days agonising over whether to accept Primakov's Tuesday offer.

"I did not sleep. I lost my appetite," he said.

Ryzhkov nevertheless was full of praise of the former foreign minister.

"Primakov's government offers us our last chance to overcome this crisis constitutionally," he said. Liberal opposition leader Grigory Yavlinsky had also turned down an offer to take on Russia's delicate social brief.

Confirmed as prime minister last Friday, Primakov has forged a centre-left coalition government that now sees two Communists holding the cabinet's top posts.

Primakov late Thursday named a Communist governor of Russia's northwestern Leningrad district as first deputy premier handling the brief of ethnic and youth policies as well as Moscow's relations with the regions.

Vadim Gustov, governor of the district surrounding Russia's second city of St.

Petersburg, joins

Yury Maslyukov, a fellow first deputy prime minister who last week was put in charge of the economy.

Gustov, elected governor of the Leningrad region in September 1996, began his career in the Central Asian republic of Uzbekistan, where he worked in a plant extracting uranium.

He became prominent in St. Petersburg politics in the early 1990s, where he bitterly disputed the neighbouring Baltic republic of Estonia's claims on some Russian territories in the Leningrad district.

Gustov also fought against shock-therapy economic reforms advocated by Russian monetarists in the first years of post-Soviet reform.

He became a member of the Federation Council, the upper house of parliament, in December 1993.

Clean-up begins to stem disease as Bangladesh floods recede

DHAKA (AFP) — Dhaka authorities Friday laid on thousands of extra workers to clean up the city as floods receded to leave mounds of stinking rubbish which pose a new health hazard.

Some 300 extra trucks and 2,000 extra workers were removing piles of debris from streets in crowded areas as diesel pumps pounded away to clear the clogged and smelly waters left after more than two months of floods.

The sun brought welcome relief to the city of nine million Friday, after two more days of rain earlier in the week, with residents and volunteers joining the clean-up effort after the country's worst floods this century.

The floods, which have left millions homeless out of Bangladesh's 120 million people, have also claimed 1,000 lives and caused widespread devastation to agriculture, industry and trans-

port networks.

Make-shift homes have sprung up to house the homeless, and emergency food aid is arriving at the country's ports to be delivered to the victims of the floods, which covered two-thirds of Bangladesh.

The health department said some 225,000 people were suffering from diarrhoea and other water-borne diseases, with some 200 people have died from the illness.

"With the recession of waters, we are likely to face severe problems with the spread of jaundice, polio, measles, malaria and skin diseases as well as diarrhoea during the next two months," Health Minister Salahuddin Yusuf told a news conference Friday.

But he added that the government was ready with a post-flood health management programme to "combat any situation."

The minister's comments

came a day after the World Health Organisation (WHO) said Bangladesh was safe for travellers despite the threat of disease, but it recommended precautions.

More than 4,000 medical teams are working in flood-hit areas to prevent outbreaks of disease, and WHO officials stressed that despite rising numbers of diarrhoea cases there was no epidemic as yet.

More than 6,000 army and navy personnel Thursday joined efforts to unload emergency food aid, including a shipment from the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) carrying 52,000 tonnes of wheat which arrived at the major ports of Chittagong and Mongla, officials said.

The WFP has asked for 355,000 tonnes of wheat worth \$84 million to help 19 million Bangladeshis.

No dog bites found on Guatemala bishop's corpse

GUATEMALA CITY (R) — A theory that a priest and his dog attacked and killed a Roman Catholic bishop in April was undermined Thursday when preliminary autopsy results found no dog bites on the exhumed body of the slain clergyman.

"So far nothing," Mario Guerra, lead forensic doctor for the chief prosecutor's office, said as he emerged from a five-hour autopsy by nine experts in the city's main morgue.

Guerra said it would take another few days to complete and file a formal autopsy report on the body of Bishop Juan Jose Gerardi. He was killed on April 26 in the garage of his Guatemala City parish, his head smashed with a cement block.

Jose Toledo, defence attorney for Mario Orantes, the Roman Catholic priest charged

with the murder, said the autopsy vindicated his client and called for his release. There was no move by authorities to do so.

Orantes worked and lived with Gerardi, who coordinated the church's human rights activities in Guatemala.

Authorities had not given a motive in the slaying, but say that they believe Orantes killed the bishop with the help of his German shepherd.

Ronald Ochoaeta of the Archbishop's Human Rights Office, said: "What we are interested in is finding the truth. If there is not a hint, the investigation must continue. If there is a hint, the investigation still must continue." A day after the murder, Guatemalan experts performed an initial autopsy on Gerardi's body without noting any signs of dog bites.

But Spanish forensic experts who later examined photographs of the autopsy said they found what appeared to be dog bite marks on the bishop's neck and hands, prompting further examination.

Thursday a team of forensic experts from Guatemala, Spain and the United States exhumed the bishop's body for a new autopsy from a crypt underneath the national cathedral in the centre of the capital.

A parish cook, who was arrested with Orantes in July, has been charged with complicity in the murder and has been given a conditional release pending trial.

Two days before his death, Gerardi presented a landmark report on atrocities during Guatemala's long civil war, leading many to believe that he was assassinated for political reasons.



British Queen Elizabeth II, wearing a Muslim 'gamis' made especially for her in England, views the children's instruction area of the Jame 'Asr Hassanil Bolkiah Mosque in Bandar Seri Begawan during the second day of her three-day visit to Brunei (AFP photo)

British queen gives the common touch in Brunei

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN (AFP) — Britain's Queen Elizabeth II Friday combined the pomp of monarchy with a visit to villagers on the second day of her tour of oil-rich Brunei on Borneo Island.

During a visit to a water village on stilts, she consoled infants ferried by mothers to a health centre and listened intently to medical staff providing advice to rural folk on maternal and child care problems.

The people of Kampung Ayer, where houses are huddled together on stilts and linked by foot bridges along the Brunei River, broke through a security cordon to catch a glimpse of the 72-year-old queen when she planted a tree to commemorate her visit to the health centre.

The queen had taken a boat ride criss-crossing the water village opposite Brunei's capital Bandar Seri Begawan before arriving at the health centre, built to decentralise the nation's primary health care services from the main hospitals.

"We have been waiting for this day. It is an auspicious day in Islam because it is a Friday," said 32-year-old hawkker Salmah Hashim under sweltering heat outside the health centre, her five-month-old boy tightly clutching her.

Mingling with rural women folk and children is seen as a modest departure from usual royal protocol for the queen

who, compared with her late former daughter-in-law, Diana, Princess of Wales, had a stiff public image.

A Buckingham Palace spokesman said programmes arranged for the visit to Brunei and Malaysia, for which she leaves on Sunday, were tailored to embrace people from all walks of life, "not just the great and the good."

Queen Elizabeth also toured the grand Jame 'Asr Hassanil Bolkiah Mosque Friday. She watched children recite verses from the Koran, the Muslim holy book, during religious classes and entered the male and female prayer halls after covering herself with a white robe provided by the host.

Officials said she showed keen interest at a briefing on pre-marital counselling offered by the mosque and seemed interested to know more.

The Church of England does not require couples to undergo such counselling which is mandatory in Islam, they said.

The queen also seemed overwhelmed by the mosque's architecture. Its walls and columns are clad in white marble from Italy and the main dome is gold plated. Impressive chandeliers consisting of gold plated, high quality crystal glass made in Austria hang from the dome.

A 200-year-old handwritten version of the Koran was also shown to visitors. The 29 domes of the mosque are surrounded by fountains equipped

with submerged neon lights.

Queen Elizabeth began the day by inspecting a military parade mounted by armed Gurkha and Bruneian troops. She was accompanied by her husband, Prince Philip, and the Sultan of Brunei.

The parade was to mark a new "alliance" between the Royal Brunei Land Force and Britain's Brigade of Gurkhas.

Troops from the Brigade have been stationed at the vital Seria oil field, about 112 kilometres south of Brunei's capital Bandar Seri Begawan, under a 1983 agreement with London to protect the main pillar of Brunei's economy.

The alliance followed a logistical reorganisation of the two units.

With Britain's return of Hong Kong to China in July last year, Brunei remains the only British military garrison in Asia.

Brunei's association with the Gurkhas began in 1962 when Britain sent about 100 Gurkhas with soldiers from Number 5 Commando, Royal Marines, to crush an armed uprising in its colony.

Queen Elizabeth also visited Brunei's state-run Radio Television Brunei where she met youths participating in a TV programme and officials of the broadcasting station who were trained by the British Broadcasting Corp.

The trip to Brunei is her first state visit this year.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Swedish Social Democrats lead polls two days before election

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — The governing Social Democrats and the conservative opposition both showed gains at the expense of minor parties in an opinion poll published Friday, two days ahead of Sweden's general election. The poll, carried out between Monday and Wednesday and published in the daily Svenska Dagbladet, showed Prime Minister Goeran Persson's Social Democrat Party ahead with 36.8 per cent, an increase of 1.2 points on another poll published Thursday. The conservative Moderate Party headed by former premier Carl Bildt had the backing of 24.8 per cent of the 2,329 people interviewed by pollsters, up from 24.6 per cent a day earlier. Support for the Left party was down from 12.7 per cent to 11.8 per cent, but the former Communists remain the surprise of the election campaign as the third-largest party in the country with almost twice their score in the 1994 election. A significant portion of the electorate, 11.4 per cent, say they are undecided about which party to vote for. The Christian Democrats fell from 11.2 to 10.1 per cent, while the Liberals dropped from 5.8 to 4.9 per cent. The Centre party, formerly agrarian, rose to 4.8 from 4.6 per cent. The Green party climbed to 4.7 from 4.3 per cent, while support for other parties rose from 1.2 to 2.1 per cent. No party is expected to win a majority in Sunday's election and observers predict the Social Democrats will remain a minority government. They are expected to seek an informal alliance with the Left party.

Pennsylvania jury rules in favour of cancer patients

PITTSBURGH (R) — Eight cancer patients who sued the operators of a defunct nuclear fuel plant for causing their illness won their case in U.S. District Court when a jury found the plant operators negligent, court officials said Thursday. The three defendants — Babcock & Wilcox Co., its subsidiary B&W Environmental Services Inc., and Atlantic Richfield Co. — were levied damages of \$36.5 million for negligence, said a clerk at U.S. District Judge Donetta Ambrose's office. Ambrose presided over the three-week trial. Spokespersons and lawyers for the defendants were not immediately available for comment. The plant at Apollo, Pennsylvania, opened in 1957 and closed in 1978 and has since been razed. A group of eight people — cancer victims and relatives of people who died of the disease — from Apollo contended that the three plant owners disregarded federal regulations and spewed cancer-causing radioactivity throughout the town. The youngest cancer patient among the plaintiffs was Tina Hall, who was diagnosed with leukaemia at age 19 and died at age 24 in 1992. The plant was owned by Nuclear Materials Equipment Corp., a company formed by nuclear engineers from Westinghouse Electric Corp. The plant was sold to Atlantic Richfield in 1967. Babcock & Wilcox bought the plant in 1971 and transferred it to its subsidiary in 1974. Babcock & Wilcox has said repeatedly that the plant operated safely and within federal regulations. However attorneys for the plaintiffs had argued that discharges from the plant's smokestacks caused cancer in the residents who lived nearby.

French court clears bartering Britons of illegal employment

TOULOUSE, France (AFP) — A French court has cleared three Britons convicted early this year of working illegally through their involvement in a local odd-job and barter system. The court in Toulouse, southwestern France, also overturned the suspended sentences of 2,000-franc (\$350) fines imposed on Sarah Two, Robert Evans and John McCulloch at the initial January hearing. The three found themselves in the dock after local builders complained they were being undercut by the System of Local Exchange (SEL) under which Evans and McCulloch earned barter points by fixing Two's roof. Evans, an out-of-work psychologist, and McCulloch, a French teacher, could then use the points to obtain food such as goats-cheese, cakes and vegetables from other group members or services such as gardening. Although their fines were only symbolic, the three appealed against the January verdict which found them guilty of illegal, undeclared employment. The Toulouse court agreed that while the SEL constituted a form of paid work, there was not enough evidence for it to be considered illegal. Since the creation three years ago of the first barter group, several such systems have spread in southwest France.

Giant turtles safe for now from Galapagos volcano

QUITO, Ecuador (R) — A volcano on the Galapagos islands spewed two rivers of molten lava but posed no immediate threat to giant turtles made famous a century ago by English naturalist Charles Darwin in his theory of evolution, park authorities said Thursday. Galapagos National Park officials said lava from the Cerro Azul volcano on the archipelago's largest island, Isabela, was unlikely to reach land inhabited by the giant turtles. The volcano erupted Tuesday after 19 years of inactivity. The Galapagos islands are part of Ecuador and lie 1,000 km west of the South American mainland. Formed by giant volcanoes thrusting out of the Pacific Ocean, they were visited by Darwin in 1835 and their unique animal population helped him develop his theory of evolution. The islands are only sparsely inhabited by humans though they now attract a steady parade of tourists. With no large land mammals, the islands are dominated by reptiles with no fear of man, like the giant turtles and marine iguanas. National Park workers flew over the volcano in a helicopter Wednesday to evaluate the size of the volcano eruption. "There are two streams of lava and they are 10 km from the coast. They are flowing southeast and it is very unlikely that they will reach the turtles because of the natural barriers of dried lava," said Cristina Paz, a park volunteer.

U.S. man murdered during burglary in Ukraine home

KIEV (AFP) — A 64-year-old man working for the U.S. government "Peace Corps" was killed in the northern Ukrainian region of Chernihiv, the country's interior ministry said Friday. The attack came during an attempted burglary Monday at the home of Viktor Verloo, from Sacramento, California, the U.S. embassy in Kiev said. Verloo was stabbed and died from his wounds. A Peace Corps official in Ukraine told AFP that Verloo had received no threats. Police arrested two women, aged 38 and 28, on suspicion of being accomplices to the murder. An arrest warrant has been issued for the suspected murderer, a 33-year-old man who is known to local police.

Space agencies regain control of solar satellite

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. and European astronomers said Thursday they had finally regained control of the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO) spacecraft orbiting the sun.

They said they managed to get the drifting satellite back facing the right direction so its solar panels can start generating power again.

"This is the best news we've had from SOHO in a long time," said George Withbroe of NASA.

"It's a big step forward in our recovery plan for SOHO," John Crenland, head of scientific projects for the European Space Agency

(ESA), added in a statement. "We were never quite sure that we would manage to make the spacecraft point back towards the sun, which is essential for its proper operation." Crenland said it was the first time the joint ESA and NASA spacecraft has been controlled from the ground since it spun out of control and communication was lost on June 24.

"Now we start a comprehensive check of all the spacecraft's systems and scientific instruments," said Bernhard Fleck, ESA's project scientist for SOHO.

Fleck said that because SOHO had been drifting

along, facing the wrong direction, some of the instruments on board had been roasted by the sun's heat while others had been exposed to frigid cold from space.

"But I'm cautiously optimistic that SOHO can win back much of its scientific capacity for observing the sun," Fleck added.

SOHO orbits 1.5 million km, or about a million miles, out in space, always staying on the sunward side of the Earth. It has seen solar eruptions and warned of electromagnetic storms that can disrupt telecommunications on Earth.

Australian Labour takes lead in latest major poll

MELBOURNE (R) — Australia's opposition Labour Party has increased its support four percentage points in one week to push ahead of the conservative government before the Oct. 3 election, an opinion poll showed Friday.

The AC Nielsen poll, published in The Age and Sydney Morning Herald newspapers, found Labour had 43 per cent of the primary vote compared with 42 per cent support for the coalition government. Last week's AC Nielsen poll put Labour at 39 per cent and the Liberal/National government at 43 per cent.

Support for Pauline Hanson's populist One Nation party was steady at eight per cent, the same since the elec-

tion was called almost three weeks ago, the national survey of 1,966 people found.

The poll also showed the government has lost the edge it gained in last week's two-party preferred vote, which shows support after redistribution of minor party votes, with Labour now on 52 per cent and the government on 48 per cent.

Labour leader Kim Beazley polled 46 per cent support as preferred prime minister, placing him ahead of Prime Minister John Howard who had 41 per cent support.

Labour's rise in the polls coincides with a surge in opposition to a goods and services tax (GST) to 52 per cent, the highest since AC Nielsen

began polling on the issue in May.

However, 45 per cent of the respondents still felt the government was best at handling tax issues, compared with Labour at 38 per cent.

The government proposes to introduce a 10 per cent GST if reelected, offset by large income tax cuts.

"The poll tells us not only that the momentum is now with Beazley, but that it is primarily driven by opposition to the GST," The Age said.

However, despite the government trailing in the poll, 50 per cent of respondents still thought the government would win the election, while only 29 per cent thought Labour would.

Jordan Times

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 جوردان تايمز يومية عربية سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية

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Take courage

PRIME MINISTER Fayez Tarawneh's policy statement to Parliament Thursday was candid and straightforward. From the onset, the prime minister stated that he and his cabinet colleagues have no magic wand to solve all the country's problems. Instead he called on every citizen to shoulder his/her responsibility in facing the challenges. He said that realism, transparency and honesty would characterise the government's policies ranging from international and regional affairs to economic and social concerns. Sound and fair inter-Arab relations, the prime minister pointed out, will be the foundation of the Kingdom's foreign policy.

Although the policy statement did not include concrete ideas and plans to address the country's domestic problems, the prime minister's promise of continuous dialogue with all sectors of society is a welcome pledge.

The arenas requiring immediate attention have been the subject of the ongoing dialogue between HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and these very same sectors. A courageous frontal assault on the problems that we face might at first stun the country, but the public would be won over if it began to see tangible results.

Unemployment and poverty are truly formidable problems that require the full cooperation of all segments of society in order to effectively tackle these grave ills. But foremost they require thorough research to identify their true magnitude so that appropriate measures can be formulated to combat them.

Programmes of action on how to pull the national economy up from its present downward course, the reaffirmation of our faith and confidence in privatisation and the consolidation of the positive attributes of free market economy as the basis for battling the current recession are all enormous tasks. Prioritising spending, for example, is an issue that needs a great deal of research before we identify the areas which can do with less funds and those that need more.

In his policy statement, the prime minister noted that the accumulation of negative features and imbalances in the country's economic, social and administrative structures have contributed to the current state of affairs. In this respect, additional and direct information on where the country may have gone wrong in the past is essential so that the public may also join in the efforts to deal with existing failings.

It is unfortunate that any meaningful reference to the environment was missing in the policy statement despite the fact that pollution and environmental threats are substantial. It is not only water that matters when it comes to the preservation and protection of the country's ecosystem but a variety of other related issues that appear to have escaped the attention of the authorities or simply figured less prominently on the government agenda.

Still, what matters most is how the new government intends to translate its ideas into actions, and do so with a much needed sense of urgency.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Mahmoud Rimawi criticised the United Nations for its decision to halt the Iraq sanctions reviews until Iraq reconsiders its decision to halt cooperation with the U.N. The writer said the resolution was unfair in linking Iraqi cooperation with the UNSCOM and reviewing the sanctions. The same resolution asked U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan to review the Iraq file personally and write a report on it, which is something Iraq has wanted for a long time, said Rimawi. France and Russia voted for the resolution for the latter reason, said Rimawi. The resolution gives Annan the power he had earlier this year when he conducted the famous agreement with Iraq, said Rimawi. The writer said the Security Council resolution serves Iraq, because it gives them the chance to cooperate with UNSCOM as well as the U.N. chief.

Al Ra'i in its editorial discussed the peace process and the American attempts to save it. The paper lashed out at the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for his headline policy. Netanyahu wants to destroy the peace process, because he believes that the Oslo Accords are a big loss for Israel, claimed the paper. Netanyahu wants to win the next elections by any means, even at the price of peace, said the paper. The paper called on the different parties to the peace process to stand against Netanyahu's policy, because leaving Netanyahu to go ahead with his radical policies will endanger the entire region. The paper also urged the United States, the European Union and the United Nations to make all possible efforts to save what is left from the dying peace.

Jordanian Perspective

A panorama of tragedy killing peace

Dr. Musa Keilani

A FEW DAYS ago in Amman Hamas celebrated the "martyrdom" of two of its leaders in Hebron.

Thousands of young Palestinian men chanted their 'jihad songs' near the University of Jordan, while Mishal, Nazzal, Ghousheh and Abu Marzouq gave their sermons, vowing revenge against Israel. The Iranian ambassador and others attending the occasion were surprised by the multitudes and throngs of Hamas sympathisers as well as the highly pitched resolve to glorify their fighting squads. That raised the question: who is benefiting from this miserable panorama of daily events? Jewish settlers open fire at will at Palestinian schoolboys, killing one and seriously wounding another. A group of settlers try to create a fait accompli by building camps on Jabal Abu Ghoem. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu promises settlers they will never be asked to leave their colonies in the West Bank. The Israeli government announces plans to expand settlements in "Judea and Samaria". The Arab League calls for international sanctions to pressure Israel into respecting Arab and Palestinian rights. U.S. mediator Dennis Ross says there is some "progress" in his efforts to narrow the gaps between Israel and the Palestinians, but major issues remain unresolved in the quest for peace in the Middle East. Meanwhile, his boss in Washington is mired in an unprecedented sex-and-lies scandal that threatens to bring him down.

Here in Jordan, we live in perpetual tension that Palestinian fury against their occupiers will lead to more violence and bloodshed which could spill over the border and upset the delicate balance we have precariously managed to create for ourselves, with the clear realisation that the state of affairs here can be consolidated only if the

Israelis and Palestinians make real peace. And, for many, it is business as usual in the Middle East five years after the much-praised Oslo agreements designed to heal the wounds of the region so that Arabs and Israelis can live together. But the region today is marked with tension and apprehension. From an external vantage point, it is all superficial and resembles a well-written and well-orchestrated play. But not so for the Palestinian people; they are living the agonies and suffering of lost opportunities with little hope that those loud voices that reaffirm support for their cause will actually metamorphose into deeds that will realise their hopes for freedom and a dignified life. What we saw and heard from Cairo on Thursday in terms of Arab support for the Palestinian cause and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's appeal for backing in his proposed move to declare an independent state in May 1999 regardless of the outcome of the Oslo process, was simple rhetoric that means very little when it comes to telling Israel that the Arab World stands together in a concerted drive to resolve the Palestinian problem once and for all. The only sign that gave us some hope was the television and photo images of Arafat being helped to climb a step by Esmat Abdul Meguid, secretary-general of the Arab League, and, more importantly, Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa. Indeed it might have been a simple human gesture on the part of Sharaa, but then, knowing as we do the workings of the Syrian mind, we do see it as a positive sign that Syria might after all be coming to terms with the realities of the Oslo agreement regardless of whether Damascus liked the idea of the Palestinians going it alone with the Israelis.

We have indeed been looking for signs from Damascus

in recent days that Syrian President Hafez Al Assad might after all be ready to live with not only the Oslo agreements, but also the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty of 1994, — perhaps the two keys to lifting the logjam in efforts for a concerted Arab strategy to confront the Israeli intransigence.

But those signals have not materialised, at least not yet. If anything, Syria might indeed be contemplating how best to hit back at Jordan for its decision to join Turkey in military training missions.

But, Sharaa's gesture to help Arafat climb a difficult step, also indicates a Syrian willingness to appreciate that Arafat is indeed in a very difficult situation and can do without Damascus messing it up further.

That, however, should not take us away from the focal point of the conflict and the reasons that prompt us to reach for and cling to straws such as Sharaa's arm helping Arafat. What we, both Arabs and Israelis, risk today is another explosion of violence in the region as a result of seething Palestinian frustration. That could explain why thousands of young university Palestinians joined Hamas last Tuesday echoing the same commitment as Mishal, vowing to fight along with Hizbollah, the Israeli occupation for ever.

That frustration might not have as much to do with the stalled 13 per cent withdrawal plan as with the bitter reality that five years after the historic occasion when the Palestinians and Israelis signed their first ever agreement, Palestinian hopes for freedom and dignity have actually been set back rather than advanced. This anti-peace Netanyahu policy came as a God-sent gift to Hamas, Saddam, Assad and Hizbollah.



View from the East

Lessons from history

The writer is a Palestinian journalist living in Jerusalem. He is the director of the Institute of Modern Media at Al Quds University. He will be contributing his column every Thursday-Friday to the Jordan Times.

By Daoud Kuttab

ONE OF THE least understood aspects of living under occupation is the nature of the relationship between the occupier and the occupied. A foreign military occupation is like no other repressive rule. There is absolutely no limit as to what the occupier can and will do. The feelings and lives of the occupied are not part of the natural considerations of those in power. The dynamics of a government being responsive to its citizens who ultimately decide on this government's political fate, don't apply in the case of a country occupying another people against their will.

As a journalist I have often thought about this issue. In a normal setting, journalists write about an issue of public interest. The issue becomes of public concern, governments who are chosen by the people are aware of public opinion and try in one way or another to address that concern. Obviously in repressive societies the system doesn't work like that. But even in such repressive regimes civil government made up of the same nationality as the citizens under its rule have limits as to what they will allow to happen to their citizens.

In the case of Palestinians living under Israeli occupation, which includes the 2.6 million living in Gaza and the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) the situation is unique. Israeli rulers from a private soldier to the Israeli minister of defence have little interest in the lives of Palestinians under their rule. We see that from the way they deal with Palestinians at checkpoints to military orders signed by the minister. The Israeli rulers don't meet Palestinians in the supermarket, don't go to school with them, and most importantly, Palestinians don't vote for the Israeli parliament or for the Prime Minister — ultimately, why should Netanyahu and his government care, when Palestinians don't cast the vote which determines whether they stay or not? From their point of view, what Israel

does or doesn't do to Palestinians is entirely up to it and its benevolence.

When normal countries face security threats from within or from without they take special precautions both on the intelligence level as well as in the streets. But no matter how serious and dangerous the threat is, normal governments do not carry out widespread restrictions on their own people. They take special care not to interrupt normal life. In countries that are not military dictatorships, political leaders refuse to allow the security people to run havoc into the country even if it is done in the name of national security.

Last week, after Israel assassinated two Palestinian Islamic militants the security apparatus acted with impunity towards the Palestinian people. More than two million people were literally locked up in one large prison.

Workers were barred from going to work in Jerusalem and in Israel. Families were not allowed to travel into or through Israel. Palestinians from the West Bank who found themselves in Gaza when the closure was announced, were told they had to wait four more days until a special bus was organised to take them home. Travellers coming through the Rafah crossing from Egypt were denied entry through Israel to the West Bank. Students, mothers, business people, taxi drivers, lovers, doctors, engineers etc. were not allowed to travel to Jerusalem or into or through Israel.

Wide ranging repressive decisions like closures, violate the Geneva Convention which considers collective punishment illegal according to international treaties. In addition, deciding to implement measures such as closures, reflect more and more the apartheid-like discriminatory policy of the state of Israel. When Israelis are killed, as in the Hebron incident two weeks ago, all Palestinians in Hebron are punished by being placed under a curfew. This is explained as a policy of deterrence: making Palestinians pay a high price for the actions of their fellow nationals, so the theory goes, will influence militants not to carry out any more acts of violence. When Palestinians are killed, as happened last week, a closure is imposed in order to prevent Palestinian acts of retaliation. So, whether Israelis or Palestinians are killed the Palestinian public is made to pay a price. And since

closures only affect those with permits (and therefore security clearance) the futility of this action from a security perspective becomes evident.

Palestinians can scream and shout as much as they want. They can protest at checkpoints, in the press, even at the U.N., but Israelis don't care. They speak and understand another language (both figuratively and practically), and therefore care very little about the conditions of the people under their rule. I remember once complaining to a military official about the closure of Palestinian schools. He told me that children from that school threw stones at Israelis. I asked him if he was interested in a fool proof method of stopping the large number of Israelis dying in road accidents. A bit confused about the reason for me asking he said yes. I told him the solution is very simple: ban all cars from driving on the roads in Israel and you will eradicate road fatalities.

Normal countries don't act this way, because they understand that life needs to go on and they try to find other means to solve the problem. But if you are a military official, with the power to do as you please, and with no concern for how it will affect the lives of ordinary citizens, you can act with impunity.

Five years ago, when the Oslo agreement was signed, Palestinians were hoping that their lives would no longer be controlled by a foreign military power. At best, we hoped that the Palestinian National Authority would be able to defend our case when the military acted with impunity. Neither of these hopes have been fulfilled.

During the Oslo implementation negotiations Shimon Peres once said, "we are negotiating with ourselves." Every now and then, we notice that the Israeli military negotiates with itself. They decide to ease the closure here, allow a few workers to enter there and permit Palestinian products to cross the Green Line. The PNA has long been too politically crippled to be able to stand up to the Israelis in defence of the average Palestinian.

In view of all this, the only real consolation for Palestinians are the lessons from history. We learn from history that no country, no matter how strong and powerful it is, can rule over another people for ever.

Regional peace, government policy under close scrutiny

Reviewed by
 Mohammad Ben Hussein

Columnists last week commented on the American influence on the Arab World, the appointment of Taher Masi and Ahmad Obaidat as senators, the Saudi crown prince's visit to Europe, the peace process and the policy of the Tarawneh government.

Al Ra'i's Fahed Faneh commented on the situation in the region saying it is totally controlled by the United States and Europe. He said Arab oil is under U.S. control, and Europe gets its share by buying it at minimal prices. The Arab Nation is the only side which does not have a role in the region, argues Faneh.

The Arab World supports the United States' policy in the region even though Washington supports Israel, said the writer. The Arab regimes accept the European economic role with its political defects. Faneh charged that Arabs love to hear nice slogans chanted even if they are never fulfilled. Europe should not be blamed for its negative role in the region, because it is incapable of competing with the United States, and there is no benefit in antagonising Washington if its interests in the region are protected, added Faneh.

Al Dustour's Jihad Momani praised the appointment of Taher Masi and Ahmad Obaidat as senators in the Upper House. Momani said the Obaidat appointment is very significant to Jordan-Israeli relations because Obaidat, former prime minister, firmly opposed all forms of normalisation with the Jewish state. Obaidat was always against boosting Jordanian ties with Israel, the Wadi Araba agreement and the cultural and economic exchanges between the two countries, said Momani. The writer said Masi's opposition to some Jordanian political decisions, comes from a belief in the welfare of Jordan. The incentive behind the appointment of Obaidat and Masi is the change in regional circumstances, said Momani, who added that the government has a space for all political orientations if all have the good of the country at heart.

Al Ra'i's Tareq Massarwa commented on Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz's visit to Europe and the United States. The presence of the American and Western

troops in the region, as well as the failure of the American administration in its efforts to revive the peace process, added to the fluctuation of oil prices has made Riyadh move to try to regain the strategic influence it lost after the Gulf war, claimed Massarwa. The Saudi leadership is involved in a concerted effort to improve its relations with the world starting in the Gulf region, said the writer, where they have started improving ties with Iran after tense relations for many years. According to English officials, Prince Abdullah will open the Iraqi file with the Americans and the Europeans during his visit, said Massarwa. He claimed that most Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia, are fed up with the American stance concerning Iraq. The writer expected the visit to be successful due to the stability and credibility of the Saudi leadership.

Al Dustour in its editorial discussed recent efforts to break the deadlock in the peace process. The paper expected the American envoy to the region, Dennis Ross, to return to Washington empty-handed. The only way to force the peace march back on the road is through American pressure on the headline policies of the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, said the paper. Washington is now busy with internal disputes triggered by Clinton's sexual escapades, so the U.S. is too busy to exert any kind of pressure on Netanyahu to succumb to Israeli obligations under the Oslo Accords, said the Arabic daily. Netanyahu will be able to kill Ross' current effort to push forward the peace exactly the way he did with previous efforts, added the paper.

Al Ra'i's Fahed Faneh criticised the government policy statement as not enough to show the real intentions of the government. The statement, argues Faneh, is designed to satisfy the deputies in order to win the vote of confidence. The writer called for a dialogue within the government and between the government and the private sector in order to improve situation in the Kingdom. He said the private sector must tell the government what it wants, and the government, as well, must tell the private sector what it wants in return. He said people have a right to know the government's true intentions before the first 100 days so they may prepare for events as they unfold, said Faneh.



For Palestinians in Gaza peace bears bitter fruit

By Lee Hockstader

IN GAZA'S Jabalya Refugee Camp, a slice of real estate twice as crowded as Manhattan and seamed with rancid fields of garbage, Hussein Radwan counts as one of the lucky ones. He has a job.

Granted, the work isn't much. Radwan spends six days a week bent over a sewing machine in a sweatshop whose single concession to comfort is an overhead fan that stirs the thick summer air. For a 12-hour day stitching together denim skirts, he makes \$5.40 — just 45 cents an hour.

But with well over a third of Gazans looking for work, Radwan knows better than to complain. "In this job I can learn new skills," the 17-year-old Palestinian said tactfully. "Things could be worse."

For many Palestinians, they are. And that has come as a bitter shock to people here who were certain that the 1993 Oslo accord with Israel would deliver at least a measure of prosperity along with its promise of peace.

Instead, most Palestinians have become poorer since the peace agreement was signed five years ago. Incomes, buying power and private investment have plunged while the number of families living in poverty have swelled.

That is particularly true in Gaza, a 140-square-mile strip of sand, sun-scorched apartment blocks and squalid refugee camps stretched along the Mediterranean Sea.

It was Gaza's Jabalya Refugee Camp that gave birth to the intifada, the 1987-93 uprising against the Israeli occupation. But the mood today in Jabalya, if anything, is meaner and more sullen than in the adrenaline-charged days of the intifada, when a generation of teenagers came of age in daily battle with the Israelis, residents say.

Now, the Israeli soldiers have withdrawn from most of Gaza, leaving rising poverty, crowding and bitterness in their wake.

"The economic situation in Gaza has deteriorated dramatically in the years of peace, which is a very strange phenomenon," said Khaled Abdel-Shafi, a Palestinian economist who sits on the Gaza

City council. "At first there was a lot of talk of Gaza becoming the Singapore of the Middle East. That's why, to a great extent, people supported the peace agreement, which in many ways is a bad deal for the Palestinians. They hoped at least the economic situation would improve."

The fear is that Palestinians will give up on the fraying Middle East peace process as their hopes for prosperity fade. Already, support is inching higher for Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, founder and spiritual leader of the militant Islamic group Hamas, according to polling data. If peace means impoverishment, some Palestinians say, why should they support it?

The question is all the more apt given the benefits the Oslo accord has brought to Israel.

Although the Israeli economy lately has hit a rocky patch, with joblessness creeping toward 10 per cent, it boomed in the mid-1990s. Most Israelis are better off now than they were when Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat shook hands at the White House five years ago.

The same cannot be said for Palestinians, however, especially in Gaza.

"The Palestinian economy is in crisis — a crisis measured not just in terms of declining income but also of declining hope," Stuart E. Eizenstat, U.S. under-secretary of state, told an Israeli audience in June. "We are at risk of diminishing the constituency for peace, not only among the public at large but increasingly among Palestinian business people."

To understand one of the reasons why the Palestinian economy has nosedived, it is helpful to pay a pre-dawn visit to the Erez Crossing, one of the few transit points between Israel and the Gaza Strip.

At 5 a.m., a half-moon still hangs in the purplish

sky, but the rush for the exits has already been on for an hour. Swarms of men — few women make the crossing — walk briskly to the Israeli security checkpoints, smoking their first cigarettes of the

day. They kick up a haze of dirt and sand that hangs like a shroud over a small army of vendors selling falafel and sweets, yoghurt and hummus.

About 50,000 Palestinian workers, half of them from Gaza, cross into Israel proper every day to work in fields, factories, homes and gardens. By Palestinian standards, their wages are good — two or three times more than they could earn for a day's work in Gaza.

Yet the number of Palestinians authorised to work in Israel is down by half from a decade ago. From Gaza, it has fallen by two-thirds.

Beginning with the intifada, Israel slashed the number of Palestinian workers it admitted each day. While the government gradually has eased up in the last two years by handing out more work permits, it has not made up for the lost earnings.

What's more, sporadic Israeli closures of Gaza and the West Bank, in response to Palestinian terror attacks, prompted Jewish-owned businesses to seek a more reliable supply of labour. That led Israel's previous government to admit a huge influx of foreign workers, many of them from Romania and other East European countries.

The result: dwindling demand for Palestinian workers and less cash coming into Gaza's economy, where incomes are already half those of the West Bank — and a tenth those in Israel.

"Savings are gradually being exhausted," said Abdel-Shafi, the city council member. "People are selling their valuables. [Foreign] assistance compensates somewhat for a drop in private savings, but it won't go on forever."

Palestinian and foreign analysts also have blamed Israeli policies for the isolation of Gaza residents from

their natural economic partners, the 1.7 million Palestinians in the West Bank. Some 16,000 Palestinian businessmen — from Gaza and the West Bank — have permits to enter Israel every day, but only 800 are allowed to travel freely between Gaza and the West Bank.

The Oslo peace accords offered a blueprint for what amounted to a free-trade zone between Israel and the West Bank and Gaza. But what has evolved in practice is very different. Israel does not charge duty on products from Gaza or the West Bank, but

its stringent security checks result in delays, higher transport costs and uncompetitive goods.

"I've seen them X-ray ice cream in the summer, taking it out of the truck box by box," said Salem Ajluni, an American economist working for the United Nations in Gaza. "I've seen eggs scanned by metal detectors."

According to Eizenstat, Palestinian entrepreneurs have complained it is cheaper to ship goods from the West Bank to Venice than from the West Bank to Gaza. As a result, Gaza makes do with more expensive goods produced in Israel.

"Now we are living in a very high-security jail," said Awni Hasham, who owns a business that makes and sells office furniture in Gaza City. "We live in a very closed area, paying every penny we have for electricity, water, a place to live. This jail is the responsibility of both sides — the Palestinian Authority and Israel. They put us in this situation."

At no point in recent history — not before Israel captured Gaza in 1967 and began its military occupation, nor after, including since Israel withdrew its troops from Gaza four years ago and Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority took over — has Gaza had an economic development plan. Lacking natural resources, Gaza languished as a supplier of cheap labour to Israel.

That was supposed to change after Israel and the Palestinians set a course toward peace in 1993. Marriott made plans to build a 200-room hotel, an investment of \$80 million that would showcase Gaza's spectacular beach. Calvin Klein expressed interest in building a factory.

But private investors became scarce as the peace process began to fray. Marriott froze its hotel plan after doing some landscaping. Calvin Klein seemed to disappear.

"For years we were asleep and dreaming of the future and our freedom," said Hasham. "And suddenly we woke up to see the future as it is. And it's not so good."

— International Herald Tribune



The squalor of the Gaza camps (file photo)

A modern Shiite: Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah

David Gardner talks to the man who has taken Hizbollah away from its violent roots and towards a more responsible civil role in Lebanon

THE SOUTH Lebanon Army (SLA) — Israel's mercenaries in south Lebanon — is on the run. The disintegration of their motley force means that Israel's elite troops have been thrust into the last active front-line of the Arab-Israeli conflict, where they are now enduring a politically costly stream of casualties at the hands of Hizbollah, the Shiite Muslim fundamentalist movement spearheading the fight against the occupation. Few people are happier about this than Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, Hizbollah's leader.

"In the past the discussion was about the fate of the (SLA) officers in the event of a settlement. Now they want guarantees even in the absence of any agreement," he said in an interview at his safe-house in Bir Al Abed, the heart of the Party of God's stronghold in the suburbs of Beirut. "No doubt their morale must have deteriorated a lot."

The government of Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's tight-wing nationalist prime minister, has offered to withdraw if the Lebanese army — reconstituted from the sectarian militias which virtually destroyed Lebanon as a country in the 1975-90 civil war — guarantees the security of its northern border. Syria,

which deploys 35,000 troops to dominate Lebanon, insists on an unconditional withdrawal, as stipulated in U.N. Security Council Resolution 425 of 1978.

In Israel, Lebanon and Syria, many believe Mr. Netanyahu will soon withdraw anyway; under attrition; keen to pose as a peacemaker despite his unwillingness to surrender the conquered Palestinian and Syrian land which would make regional peace possible; and bemoaning the sectarian Lebanese, artificially united by the Israeli occupation, would then turn their discontent on Syria, or perhaps themselves, again.

Sheikh Nasrallah does not buy that. "Netanyahu," he says, "is an opportunist, but he won't do it. It would be to admit defeat at the hands, not even of an army, but a certain group (Hizbollah). They would be stigmatised as losers, which would only encourage the Palestinians to redouble their efforts against the occupation of their land (by Israel)."

Hizbollah's agenda has long since moved beyond the resistance to Israel which has earned it prestige in politically fragmented Lebanon. It has come a long way since the infamous suicide bombings and kidnappings of westerners of the early 1980s. Sheikh Nasrallah is now bidding to join the Lebanese government. He also believes that the rise of Mohammad Khatami, the reformist president of

Iran, is a model of enlightened Islam which is sketching out a path for the region towards modernity and democracy.

Hizbollah was inspired and initially financed by the Shiite Islamic revolution in Iran and is licensed by Syria in a proxy conflict through which Damascus hopes to recover the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. It was born of Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, which three years later Hizbollah fighters suicide-bombed back into the southern border enclave.

Hizbollah now has an impressive social and political network: hospitals, schools, a public housing unit and a widely watched TV station, mosques, orphanages, and the most assiduous faction in a parliament full of clan leaders and sectarian hacks. Since Lebanon's recent and first municipal elections in 35 years, Hizbollah can also claim to be the leading organisation of the Shi'a, the largest of Lebanon's communities.

Much of this is down to Sheikh Nasrallah, whose name means "God's victory." Now 38, he took over the organisation in 1992 after his predecessor, Sheikh Abbas Musawi, was assassinated in an Israeli helicopter ambush, and he has just been reelected to a third term as secretary-general. Wearing the black turban of a Sayyid — or descendant of the Prophet Mohammad — he is precise in his

answers which are devoid of rhetoric but laced with acerbic humour.

"Yes," he says, "Hizbollah does foresee eventual entry into the government. It's a question of timing and whether we can get elements of our programme considered." A new government is expected at the end of November, after parliament elects a new (Christian) president, who appoints the executive (Sunni Muslim) prime minister, expected to be Rafiq Al Hariri, the billionaire construction tycoon and current premier who has staked his career on the renaissance of Beirut.

"We want a government of institutions, with ministers who make decisions, not the board of a corporation" — a reference to Mr. Hariri's no-nonsense, businessman's approach to his project of rebuilding Beirut as the Middle East's financial centre. He wants, too, "a professional and honest civil service regardless of religion" to replace the sectarian quota system imposed by some of the corrupt warlords and feudal clan leaders in today's cabinet. And priority to the fight against joblessness and poverty.

Hizbollah has long eschewed the idea of an Islamic state in Lebanon, pursuing instead a programme which is almost Blairite in its pragmatism.

It has been encouraged in this by the impact of President Khatami's Islamic democracy project in

Iran, which, if successful in its attempt to make government accountable to the rule of law and the assent of the governed, will challenge the fossilised despotism bequeathed most of the Arab World.

What is going on in Iran "presents a model and an example," says Sheikh Nasrallah. "There are a lot of models. Some of them very dangerous like the Taliban" — the neo-medieval Sunni militia which has conquered most of Afghanistan with Saudi Arabian and Pakistani backing and U.S. logistics support.

This is the "Made in USA" combination, he points out, which backed the Mujahadeen resistance to the Soviet invasion in the 1980s and bequeathed the "Arab-Afghan" phenomenon — former Arab volunteers in that war who now turn their guns on their governments and U.S. targets.

It suits the U.S., he says, to "show Islam as ignorance, savagery, the degradation of women, a regression to factional warfare, and to teach this not as propaganda but through groups to which they give arms."

In Iran, by contrast, "what is being presented is an enlightened and tolerant Islam, based on the origins of our religion. This model will have a gradual and positive impact on the Arab World, affecting its people, and through them its governments."

— Financial Times

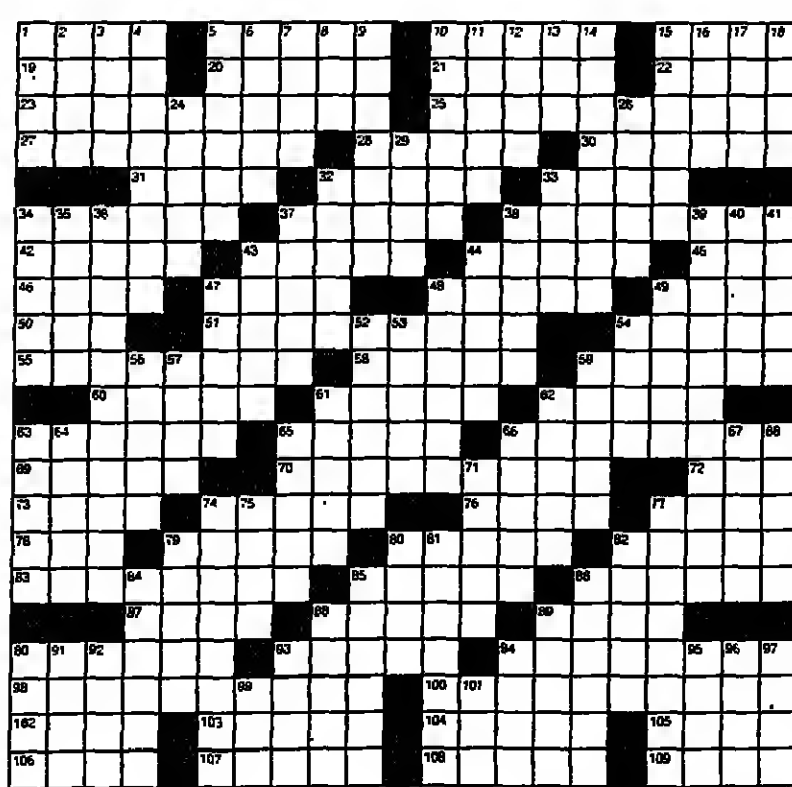
The Saturday Crossword

ASHORE

By Edgar Fontaine, Dighton, Massachusetts

- ACROSS
- 1 Wife of a rajah
 - 5 Chew noisily
 - 10 Accumulate
 - 15 Storage structure
 - 19 Tarnish situation
 - 20 For short
 - 21 Taxi dispatcher
 - 22 Shade of purple
 - 23 Goddess of the moon
 - 24 Temporary structure?
 - 25 Recreational vehicle
 - 27 Rolling grasslands
 - 28 Small conbrids
 - 30 Commands
 - 31 Nice legs: slang
 - 32 Dresses in
 - 33 Smelling residue
 - 34 Quaking trees
 - 37 Fine-grained silica
 - 38 Keyboard element
 - 42 Peek
 - 43 Tale after
 - 44 Valentine shape
 - 45 Grow old
 - 46 Ancient people of northern Britain
 - 47 Wingless
 - 48 "Trees" and "The Raven," e.g.
 - 49 Wild shot
 - 50 One of T. Turner's characters
 - 51 Shore
 - 52 Transportation?
 - 54 Ray's title
 - 55 Worked up
 - 58 Covers with fat
 - 59 Lynx or tiger
 - 60 Showed sympathetic concern

- DOWN
- 1 Abrasive tool
 - 2 Hebrew month
 - 3 Pin's sister spirit
 - 4 Impoverished
 - 5 Insurance cases
 - 6 Firefighter's equipment
 - 7 Lining ends
 - 8 1,000,000: slang
 - 9 Hunts
 - 10 Balaish or Gory
 - 11 Balaish
 - 12 Lamentation's cry
 - 13 US defense grp.
 - 14 Students
 - 15 Oozy sediment
 - 16 Colossal
 - 17 Art print abbr.
 - 18 Period of light
 - 24 Turn a handle
 - 26 Leaflike plant part
 - 28 Seldom seen



- 61 —Tern
- 62 "Blind Blues" playwright
- 63 Packing material
- 65 Hatched
- 66 Falling in
- 69 Reprobrates
- 70 Protection, of a sort
- 72 Jamaican music
- 73 Sheridan and Miller
- 74 Sleek
- 76 Witch
- 77 McCarthyism letters
- 78 Muscle spasm
- 79 Worship
- 80 Gaffer Stewart
- 82 Elevate
- 83 Plotters
- 85 Granges
- 86 Stroked lightly
- 87 Solitary
- 88 Between then and now
- 89 Expeditious
- 90 Female graduate
- 93 Modesty
- 94 Solar system models
- 98 Swimmers' protection
- 100 New-swimmer's device
- 102 Fragrance
- 103 Glorify
- 104 Dispatch boat
- 105 Dermo ending?
- 106 Coin flip
- 107 Lacoste and Russo
- 108 Pleasure cruiser
- 109 Youngsters

Corruption: Facing the seamy side of economic failure

By Flora Lewis

THE TABOO word "corruption" is now front and centre at international conferences on development, no longer the dirty word that no one is prepared to speak. This is a notable advance, because it is leading to some practical exchanges on how to deal with it.

The spreading economic crisis — East Asia, Russia, Latin America, perhaps Wall Street — has everyone worried. But the slogging effort to promote development is going on, with the same insistence that it depends on attracting investment. Abandoning globalisation is not one of the many lessons to draw from collapsing regional markets, was the conclusion at a meeting here.

It was the second Mediterranean Development Forum, sponsored by the World Bank and 10 think tanks in the area, with the idea of giving experts in the South a better chance to compare experiences and speak to each other, as well as to talk back to the hectoring North.

Some 450 people from 40 countries were present. They were neither big businessmen nor top officials but the kind of people who do the research and study the specifics underlying grand theories.

They were prepared to be blunt about why the Middle East-North Africa region is lagging behind some other parts of the world in economic growth, and they don't see crashing, as some "miracle" economies have done, as a reason to avoid pushing forward.

Rather, to a large extent, the focus was on reinforcing and assuring gains by broad public participation and better governance. The view was that open societies are better able to weather economic storms.

"Decentralisation" and "transparency" are the jargon words now, and they mean promoting civil liberties and accountability, which are both in short supply in the area.

One careful study showed that coun-

tries which permit strikes and demonstrations do not suffer the expected setbacks but rather do better with investment projects than those with a firm surface stability achieved by repression. Tolerating "public expression of social tensions" turns out to be an economic plus.

Corruption is recognised as a severe

To fight corruption, 'tackle the easy problems first', and then 'fry the big fish'

programme based in Riyadh, but turned out to be a Libyan exile, rose to make an impassioned response about the need she sees for such programmes. She is 51, American-educated and the mother of two daughters, she said afterward. And "I am angry."

She said she had no trouble functioning as a woman in Saudi Arabia, although she does refrain from driving a car and wears a veil there. "It's a local custom, like an Indian woman in a sari. It doesn't bother me." But she was bothered by the question whether she would have dared to make the same public statement of contempt for the way things work if she were back home. She didn't answer.

Daniel Kaufmann of the World Bank offered a long, detailed study of practical ways to go about fighting endemic corruption, including the necessity of penalising both the givers and the receivers of bribes.

The OECD, representing the world's industrial states, has agreed that its members should stop allowing tax deductions for bribes paid to do business abroad, and make the payments a crime. That, said Mr. Kaufmann, "is the easier first stage." He suggests incentives for honesty through business associations and lighter penalties for the party involved in a corrupt transaction who reports it first.

Nobody has been able to add up the real cost of corruption to the world's economy, but it is well known that countries which ought to be rather poor like Congo and Nigeria, are dead poor and getting nowhere, while countries like Russia and Indonesia have billionaires shovelling money abroad and starving millions.

It is not really true that the market does not care where the money goes so long as it can be made. The current crises, and the laggards and failures, show that corruption supported by autocracy can make a big difference. Fighting it is a serious way to promote development.

— International Herald Tribune

Tarawneh: Government will strive to consolidate gains of reforms

By Tareq Ayyub

AMMAN — Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh said his government will press ahead with economic reforms to fight widespread poverty and unemployment.

Speaking to Lower House deputies on Thursday at the opening of the second extraordinary session of the summer and ahead of a vote of confidence in his government, Tarawneh pledged that his 24-man team will also proceed with privatisation despite criticism by deputies and some in the business sector.

"The economic restructuring programme has succeeded within the aspired goals to narrow the imbalances in the balance of payments, regaining the strength of the dinar and maintaining a reserve that would protect it," the premier told the lawmakers.

"The government will work hard to deepen the benefits of the programme and push ahead on the road of economic development," he said.

Tarawneh was referring to the economic restructuring agreement signed with the International Monetary Fund in 1989.

"The financial policies of this government strive to consolidate the gains of the economic reforms... the political and economic basis (of the budget) will be the continuation of the financial reform," said the 49-year-old premier.

He said the government will continue to follow rigorous monetary policies in order to ensure the stability of the national currency and maintain the credibility of the investment climate in the country.

Tarawneh said the government will determine

expenditure priorities before drafting the 1999 budget which will be submitted to the House at the proper time.

"The government will go ahead with the privatisation programme in line with the national strategy that was initiated by the Lower House," he said, referring to the House debate on the privatisation process which drew criticism among members of the 80-member chamber.

But he pledged that the privatisation process will not involve any prejudices against public sector employees.

"This will not lead to harming the workers or serving the monopolies and narrow interests of the private sector," the premier said.

He said the government will exert all efforts to increase foreign exports, especially to the Arab World and the Palestinian

market in particular.

"The government will continue its negotiations with the Israeli government to end its monopoly over the Palestinian market and to remove all obstacles that impede the flow of Jordanian goods to Palestine," he said.

Tarawneh was referring to continuous Israeli blockades of Jordan-made goods to the self-rule Palestinian areas despite trilateral agreements among the three parties, which caused dissatisfaction among the business community in the country.

The premier said his government will extend all assistance to encourage domestic and foreign investments in the Kingdom in various fields.

On poverty, Tarawneh said his team will exert all possible efforts to put an end to this phenomenon to reach an acceptable level through programmes, legis-

lation and national action.

He noted that the social safety net plan was introduced to eradicate poverty, unemployment and to uproot their causes through several programmes, which include financing small and medium projects by poor families and direct financial assistance.

Tarawneh pledged that his government will submit a draft law that regulates the activities of the commercial banks to include "new developments" in the banking sector and to develop a secondary market to trade in government and corporate bonds.

He said his government will support the tourism industry, a major foreign currency earner which amounted to 10 per cent of the national domestic product in the past few years.

Jordan central bank sees 2.5 per cent growth in 1998

AMMAN (R) — Jordan's central bank forecast a modest 2.5 per cent growth in real GDP (gross domestic product) in 1998 against 2.2 per cent last year, the bank's annual report said.

The bank attributed the modest growth, at market prices, to an unfavourable regional environment hurt by uncertainty over Middle East peace-making and depressed oil prices, which impact on Jordanian hard currency remittance flows

and labour opportunities in oil-rich Arab Gulf states.

Inflation was forecast to stay within "acceptable levels" of around 3.5 per cent in 1998 provided IMF-directed structural reforms stay on track, the bank said.

Officially the cost of living index which focuses on a handful of basic commodities has remained constant in an average range of four to five per cent over the last few years.

The bank said the 1998

budget deficit, excluding foreign aid, was expected to reach six per cent of GDP and 2.6 per cent after factoring in assistance, which was budgeted at 189.8 million dinars.

But the government was hopeful growth in local revenue would top 11.6 per cent, while public expenditure would rise by a more modest 8.4 per cent, reflecting greater fiscal restraint, the bank's report said.

REUTERS REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
	US Dollar	DE Mark	GB Sterling	CH Franc	JP Yen	CA Dollar	IT Lira	NL Guilder	FR Franc
US Dollar	1.0000	0.8938	1.3868	132.70	1.6281	1672.00	1.9362	0.5782	
DE Mark	0.8910	1.0000	0.8220	78.48	0.8034	897.48	1.1275	1.3626	
GB Sterling	1.0942	2.8505	1.0000	234.53	2.6783	2818.31	3.2132	9.5658	
CH Franc	0.7186	121.56	0.4284	1.0000	1.0879	1201.00	137.08	4.0787	
JP Yen	0.0070	1.2731	0.4488	1.0468	1.0000	12.58	143.82	4.2878	
CA Dollar	0.8840	1.1061	0.3881	0.9008	1.18	1089.20	1.2472	3.7119	
IT Lira	0.0008	1.0111	0.3548	0.0831	1280.40	0.9138	11.40	3.3934	
NL Guilder	0.2241	88.63	0.3110	72.39	68.60	0.8010	878.08	2.9747	
FR Franc	0.1762	0.2978	0.1048	24.4889	23.40	0.2882	33.69	33.6900	

Middle Eastern Currencies									
	US Dollar	Jordan Dinar	Saudi Riyal	Bahraini Dinar	Qatar Dinar	Kuwaiti Dinar	Emirati Dinar	Lebanese L1000	Egyptian
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7080	3.7500	0.3770	3.6400	3.2041	3.6728	1812.50	3.4028
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	1.0000	5.2800	0.5317	5.1240	4.5288	5.1803	2133.20	4.7890
Saudi Riyal	0.2688	0.1980	1.0000	0.1008	0.97	0.8611	0.88	403.27	0.8072
Bahraini Dinar	2.58	1.8807	9.8491	1.0000	9.88	8.967	8.74	4012.10	0.9288
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0304	1.0304	1.0000	0.9035	1.01	418.62	0.9347
Kuwaiti Dinar	3.2884	2.3316	12.3334	1.2337	11.97	12.08	4973.89	0.9347	
Emirati Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0812	1.0108	0.9911	0.8628	1.01	411.81	0.9284
Lebanese L1000	0.88	0.4688	2.4797	0.2492	2.4096	0.2011	2.4283	1.0000	2.9496
Egyptian	0.2828	0.2084	1.1023	0.1108	1.0858	0.8894	1.0794	444.83	1.0000

Energy			Mid-East Currencies					
Brent	0.00	0.00	SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4810	0.19828	0.37088	36.4208
W. Texas	16.05	14.57	AE Dirham	0.4723	0.48088	0.76163	0.37854	36.1718
Bonny	0.00	0.00	KW Dinar	3.2684	5.58483	1.99188	4.57247	436.872
Dubai	13.30	12.84	BH Dinar	0.3770	4.48933	1.6748	3.86732	382.361
U.I. Gas	133.00	133.00	CY Pound	1.9823	3.2745	1.1838	2.7785	284.75

Metal Prices									
	Gold (oz)	Silver (oz)	Platinum (oz)	AL (3 Months)	CU (3 Months)	Zinc (3 Months)	Lead (3 Months)	Ni (3 Months)	
Gold (oz)	290.8	281.3							
Silver (oz)	4.88	4.98							
Platinum (oz)	383.7	361.7							
AL (3 Months)	1348	1348							
CU (3 Months)	1862	1868							
Zinc (3 Months)	1000	1003							
Lead (3 Months)	821	828							
Ni (3 Months)	4115	4120							

Energy									
	Coffee (c/ton)	Cocoa (\$/ton)	Sugar (\$/ton)	Wheat (\$/ton)	Soya (c/ton)	Tea (kg/ton)	Berley (\$/ton)	Rice (\$/ton)	
Coffee (c/ton)	103.08		Spot						
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1827		Spot						
Sugar (\$/ton)	216		Spot						
Wheat (\$/ton)	101		Spot						
Soya (c/ton)	28.71		Spot						
Tea (kg/ton)	128		Spot						
Berley (\$/ton)	0		Spot						
Rice (\$/ton)	410		Spot						

* JOD Cross Rates

	US Dollar	GB Sterling	DE Mark	CH Franc	FR Franc	JP Yen	NL Guilder	IT Lira
US Dollar	0.706	0.710						
GB Sterling	1.1878	1.1937						
DE Mark	0.4188	0.4209						
CH Franc	0.8087	0.8112						
FR Franc	1.1249	1.1285						
JP Yen	0.627	0.6298						
NL Guilder	0.3713	0.3732						
IT Lira	0.4228	0.426						

Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

Proposed amendments to Social Security Law link pensions to cost of living

By Ghalia Alul

AMMAN — After months of debate, the Social Security Corporation has proposed amendments to the Social Security Law which would raise pensions in line with the cost of living, according to SSC Public Relations Director Ali Issa.

"If passed, this decision will be a great leap in the corporation's law," Issa told the Jordan Times.

Proposed amendments did not affect the current retirement age of 60 for men and 55 for women, nor the early retirement age of 45 provided the retiree has been paying his/her monthly contributions to the corporation for 15 continuous years.

Issa added that the corporation which has, since its establishment in 1980, benefited 380,571 Jordanians, decided to increase the number of pension beneficiaries or the surviving relatives of a pensioner to include the unborn child of a deceased male pensioner and his widowed sisters and daughters. The benefit would also extend to the surviving husbands of pensioners.

"The current law only benefits disabled, widowed husbands," Issa said. The amendments also propose to extend benefits to the sons and brothers of the deceased who are over 18, unlike the current legislation which only

benefits those under 18 years of age, according to Issa.

He added that the SSC which has investments totalling about JD 1.1 billion, will not determine the percentage paid on pensions until it concludes an "actuarial" study conducted once every five years to predict the corporation's financial situation.

Under the current legislation, the retiree receives a minimum pension of JD78 monthly — below the current per capita income of about JD90.

Issa added that the corporation in its draft legislation, eliminated a loophole in the Labour Law which allows the employer to terminate the worker's service for health reasons.

"Under the proposed legislation the corporation will not allow the employer to terminate the service of any SSC subscriber until he/she undergoes a check up by the corporation's medical committee," Issa said.

Other amendments, Issa added, include improving upon the corporation's work-related injuries list

whereby subscribers suffering from previously unlisted injuries will receive compensation after their case is presented to the cabinet.

The corporation has also decided to raise from 65 to 75 per cent the amount paid for compensation for hospitalised subscribers who sustained work-related injuries and illnesses, according to Issa.

The draft law proposes to grant a subscriber's heirs 50 per cent of the salary earned by the deceased before his/her death if the death was caused by an occupational injury, Issa said.

Since its establishment, the SSC spent JD 318 million on 380,571 subscribers, pensioners and beneficiaries while during the first half of 1998, it spent about JD 31 million on 13,000 subscribers, pensioners and beneficiaries.

Of the total beneficiaries, the SSC provided medical care to 132,000 subscribers, while 21,000 received lump sum compensation, and 38,000 received pensions.

According to analysts the corporation's expenses

are expected to grow especially with the increase in population and the rise in the number of retired employees.

But according to Issa, the SSC — which expects to match its 1997 profits of JD80 million this year — is capable of fulfilling its obligations towards its subscribers because it keeps track of its financial situation through the actuarial studies.

The SSC's spending on pensions in the first half of this year increased by 17.7 per cent over the same period last year, the corporation's Director General Safwan Toukan has said.

He said during the first half of this year about 3,044 retired subscribers became eligible for pensions amounting to JD21.5 million, while 4,000 workers received a total of JD 1 million for the cost of medical treatment during the same period.

The amendments to the law must be presented to the cabinet and Parliament before it is endorsed, Issa added.

A New approach

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STYLE

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

1 Across: 1. Cradle call, 5. Saudi, e.g., 9. Repeat oneself, 14. Lupine and others, 15. Infant, 16. Fragrance, 17. Gymnastic feat, 19. Improvises musically, 20. Conductor, 21. Ancient Irish village, 23. Actor Wallace, 24. Mr. T's last name, 26. Sator, 28. Prepare a play, 32. Little legumes, 33. Physicians' soc., 34. Sailing vessel, 35. Working code, 39. Coloration, 41. Birthplace of Apollo, 43. Fishing device, 44. Standish stand-in, 46. Desert springs, 48. Boetic pasture, 49. Leak slowly, 51. Truck driver, 53. Apollo spacecraft, 56. Letter-clanication words, 57. Hockey's Bobby, 58. Author of "Pornoy's Complaint", 60. Nation of Roma, 64. Architect Jones, 66. Gymnastic feat, 68. Sheets and towels, 69. Highland Gaelic, 70. Lump of dirt, 71. Some files, 72. Defeat, 73. Christian Andersen.

3 Down: 3. Trading center, 4. Shroud, 5. Loathed, 6. "Norma", 7. Act as a lookout, e.g., 8. Rule of an organization, 9. Devastated, 10. Notable period, 11. Gymnastic feat, 12. Sufficient, 13. Mr. Ararat, 18. hevoc, 22. Get handed a bum, 25. Start of a path?, 27. British peer, 28. Pro (in proportion), 29. Oscar-winner, 30. Gymnastic feat, 31. Brilliance, 35. Old Testament book, 37. Let loose, 38. Sorrowful drop, 40. Golf shop buy, 42. Coasts.

45 Across: 45. Transmission, 47. "NYPD Blue" co-star Jimmy, 50. Grp. headed by 130, 52. Grasp suddenly, 53. Spirals, 54. Putter Palmer, 55. Barrymore or Waters, 59. Protagonist, 61. Refrain, 62. Part of, 63. States further, 65. Earth; prel., 67. Ninnyhammer.

Peanuts

SOMETIMES I LIE AWAKE AT NIGHT, AND I ASK, "WHY ISN'T THE WORLD PERFECT?"

THEN A VOICE COMES TO ME THAT SAYS, "WE ADMIT IT... THERE ARE STILL A FEW KINKS THAT NEED WORKING OUT."

Andy Capp

THIS WEEK LET'S HAVE A GAMBOL ABOUT MINEWILL GAMBOL ON ANYTHING

GOOD IDEA, VICAR, THAT LASS OF MINEWILL GAMBOL ON ANYTHING

NOW SHE'S STARTED TUCKING HER MONEY AWAY IN THE MORE THAT ILL BE WORTH SOMETHING SOMEDAY

Mutt'n'Jeff

WHEN YOU MARRIED ME YOU MARRIED ME FOR LIFE!

YES, AND I SOON FOUND OUT YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY!

DO YOU KNOW WHAT A FAMILY MAN IS SUPPOSED TO DO?

YES! A FAMILY MAN IS SUPPOSED TO FEED SEVERAL SMALL MOUTHS AND ONE BIG ONE!

I LOVE I, I SWEAR I WAS ONLY JOKING!

THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen

"It took me three hours to download 281,567 E-mails. I've got a hunch that some of it might be advertising."

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

KULCC

SUMOE

VOALAW

USUBED

Answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumbles: CHIDE DRAFT GOODLY RAMPOU Answer: What the miner's son carried to the garbage can — THE MOTHER LOAD

Commonwealth Games

Cyclists bounce back after day of drama; Oakes wins 6th medal

KUALA LUMPUR (AP) — Australia's cyclists put aside the shock expulsion of world champion teammate Lucy Tyler-Sharman to claim two golds and a silver, in Commonwealth Games velodrome action Friday.

Tyler-Sharman, kicked out by the Australians for criticizing cycling team officials, was believed to be on a flight home late Friday.

While Australian chef de mission Don Stockins acted swiftly to expel Tyler-Sharman, Canadian officials stood "100 percent" behind their field hockey players, who were involved in ugly scenes after a disputed loss Thursday.

The dramas overshadowed early competition on Day 8 Friday, but England's long-serving athlete Judy Oakes restored some of the gloss when she became the first track and field competitor to win a medal at six consecutive games.

Oakes, sporting a golden wave in her hair, collected a medal to match with a winning effort of 18.83 meters on her first throw.

Friday's triumph makes it three golds, two silvers and a bronze since she made her games debut at Edmonton in 1978. Oakes won a bronze there, gold in Brisbane in '82, silver at Edinburgh in '86 and Auckland '90 and gold at Victoria, British Columbia, four years ago.

European and World Cup champion Iwan Thomas of Wales won a thrilling men's 400-meter final in a games record 44.52. He held out English rival Mark Richardson, with "Sri Lanka's" Sugath Thilakarathne third.

With women's world 400-meter champion Cathy Freeman out injured, Sandie Richards cruised to an easy victory, giving Jamaica its first gold in the event.

Onchie Achike gained a gold for England with a games record in the triple jump while Stuart Rendell captured Australia's third hammer title in a row, and Yvonne McGregor won the



Ato Boldon of Trinidad and Tobago (1747) jubilates after winning the men's 100-metre final during the 16th Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur. Boldon clocked 9.88 seconds for the gold medal. Obadele Thompson of Barbados (1106) came into the third in 10.00 while Eric Nkansah-Appiah of Ghana (1372) finished sixth in 10.18 (AP Photo)

Andrea Blackett of Barbados also set a games mark to win the women's 400-meter hurdles.

The off-track cycling drama began when Tyler-Sharman, a former American who moved to Australia in 1991, accused team officials of sabotaging her bike after both feet came out of the pedals during her semifinal Thursday night. She also felt ill and speculated that her drinks might have been spiked.

The expulsion cost Tyler-Sharman her chance to ride for bronze in Friday's finals, and further embarrassed a cycling outfit dubbed Team Tabloid for its constant squabbling and bitter infighting.

Sarah Ulmer of New Zealand beat Australian Alayna Burns by 1.3 seconds for the gold in the pursuit. Ulmer finished in 3:41.667 in the afternoon heat and humidity, slower than the games record of 3:40.389 that Burns had set Thursday.

England's Yvonne McGregor won the

bronze uncontested.

Australian Brad McGee broke his own games record to claim the men's 4,000-meter individual pursuit in 4 minutes, 30.594 seconds, beating compatriot Luke Roberts in the final. Matt Illingworth won the bronze by outracing fellow Englishman Brad Wiggins.

World record holder Shane Kelly gave Australia its second gold from the three events Friday when he won the 1-kilometre time trial. Kelly, who won the 1997 world title after a disastrous slip cost him a chance at the 1996 Olympics, prevailed by .4 seconds over British record holder Jason Queally.

Canada's hockey players were the subject of a police report after causing minor damage to their locker room following their 2-1 loss to Malaysia. Spokeswoman Teresa Moore said the players made a full apology Friday and offered to cover the estimated \$25 cost to repair a damaged door.

She said the team, which angrily confronted Scottish

umpire David Wallis after his decision allowed Malaysia's late winner, only caused the damage because they were locked out of the dressing room and were scared of the crowd.

The hosts were also involved in controversy at the boxing ring Friday when English light flyweight Gary Jones went down 15-11 to local fighter Sapok Biki in their semifinal.

"I thought I won it and at the end of the day I've been robbed of a gold medal," said Jones. "He was nowhere near as good as me." Malaysia picked up its fifth gold medal Friday when Nurul Huda Baharin won the women's individual air rifle event at Langkawi Island. She scored 494.8 points to win from Sharon Bowes of Canada (493.3) and Louise Minett of England (491.7).

Canada's James Paton won the men's individual full-bore rifle gold medal with 402 points. Malaysia's Zainal Abidin Md Zain took the silver with 400 and Andrew Luckman of

England collected the bronze, also with 400.

Canadian Metodi Igorov added a gold in the men's rapid fire pistol competition while New Zealand's Stephen Petterson, who won two golds in small-bore rifle shooting in the 1994 games, won another in the men's free rifle prone event. Igorov's gold, however, was put on hold because of a South African protest calling for proof of the Bulgarian native's Canadian nationality.

Australia's Olympic champion Michael Diamond won the men's individual trap in a shootout against England's Ian R. Peel.

New Zealand also won the first medal on offer in cricket at the Commonwealth Games when it beat Sri Lanka by 51 runs in the bronze medal playoff.

Allrounder Chris Harris was the star with an unbeaten 55 in the Kiwis 212-7 off 50 overs and took two wickets as Sri Lanka was all out for 161 in the 45th. Australia will play South Africa for the gold Saturday.

England claimed three gold and three silver medals in the 85-kilogramme weightlifting division. Leon Griffin won two golds in the overall and clean and jerk sections and silver in the snatch. Stephen Ward had the snatch gold and silver in the other two sections.

Australia's former world champion Kiril Kounev won all three medals in the 94kg division with a snatch of 165kg and clean and jerk of 205kg.

Despite the end of the swimming program, Australia was still dominant at the games pool Friday. Diver Chantelle Michell bounced to a gold medal on the 1-meter springboard, amassing 271.560 points from her five dives to beat Canadian pair Blythe Hartley (248.250) and Eryn Bulmer (239.400).



Newcastle United's Temuri Ketsbala from Georgia (L) is held back by Partizan Belgrade's Goran Trobok during the second half of their UEFA Cup Winners Cup first round, first leg, game at St. James's Park. Newcastle won the game 2-1 (Reuters photo)



Lazio's Conceicao (R) heads for the ball away from Losanne's Iglesias during their European Cup Winners Cup first round first leg soccer match at Rome's Olympic stadium (Reuters photo)

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Nigeria ditch stars Ikpeba, Kanu, Amokachi

LAGOS (AFP) — Nigeria have dropped World Cup trio Victor Ikpeba, Daniel Amokachi and Nwankwo Kanu from their Nations' Cup squad, press reports said Friday. Ikpeba, the African Footballer of the Year, plays for Monaco in France. Daniel Amokachi for Turkish side Besiktas Istanbul and Kanu for Inter Milan in Italy. The Punch newspaper said the three, who all played in the World Cup earlier this year, had been axed from the 27-man squad to play Burkina Faso on October 4 in Ouagadougou. The group comprises 18 professionals and nine amateurs.

Ex-stars turn out for injured policeman

STRASBOURG (AFP) — Former French and German football stars will turn out in a Sunday charity match for a French policeman seriously injured by hooligans during the World Cup. Aime Jacquet, who resigned as France's coach after his team's World Cup win, and FIFA president Joseph Blatter will attend the game in the German town of Kehl. Organisers expect to raise over 30,000 pounds (around \$45,000). Ex-German striker Dieter Muller hoped the event would erase the memory of "this sad affair". Daniel Nivet, 43, spent six weeks in a coma after being clubbed and kicked by a group of German right-wing hooligans in Lens on June 21. He has partially recovered but is still undergoing treatment. Other players taking part include German internationals Rudi Voller, Horst Hrubesch and Felix Magath.

Man. United star Cruyff denies Barcelona betrayal

LONDON (AFP) — Manchester United winger Jordi Cruyff responded angrily Friday to claims he gave Barcelona inside information on his teammates before this week's Champions League clash. Cruyff, who previously played for the Spanish club, said he was "furious" about the allegation, made by Barcelona goalkeeper Ruud Hesp before Wednesday's 3-3 draw. The two Dutchmen had met at Barcelona's pre-season training camp in England last month. But Cruyff claimed: "I never spoke to the Barcelona players about United and I'm disgusted and furious about this. He said his Manchester United colleagues had 'laughed because they know what I'm like.' They know I'm an honest player... Alex Ferguson has told me not to worry about it because he knows how the world works." Cruyff said he had been extremely motivated for the game, adding: "I wanted to beat Barcelona because they are one of my former teams and it would have meant a lot to me if we had."

Camacho makes seven changes in first national lineup

MADRID (AP) — The first lineup announced by Spain's new coach Jose Antonio Camacho Friday included seven changes from the team that suffered a humiliating defeat against semi-professional Cyprus two weeks ago.

The exhibition match against Russia next Wednesday will be Camacho's first as coach of the national side that was under Javier Clemente's command.

Camacho replaced Clemente on Tuesday, with a mission to shine up the squad's image tarnished by a disappointing World Cup performance and corroded by the Cyprus defeat in a European Championship qualifier.

Among the seven new call-ups only Jordi Lardin from Atletico de

Madrid has played for the national team before.

"The midfield is going to be completely new," Camacho told reporters, pointing to the inclusion of relative unknowns Vicente Egongio from Mallorca, Antonio "Ito" Perez from Betis, and Bitor Alkiza from Athletic de Bilbao.

After Camacho's shakeup, the national squad is most influenced by players from Real Madrid, Atletico de Madrid and Athletic de Bilbao all of which have three representatives. FC Barcelona is left with only two.

England manager Hoddle faces World Cup grilling

LONDON (AFP) — England manager Glenn Hoddle was facing a grilling here on Friday as his handling of the team at the World Cup was scrutinised by the Football Association.

Hoddle, dogged by controversy since the tournament, gave his team report to the International Committee early Friday.

Many committee members, according to press reports, remain unhappy after the manager decided to publish a World Cup diary which contained controversial passages relating to key players.

His revelations that midfielder Paul Gascoigne went berserk and smashed up furniture after being dropped from the squad led to claims that Hoddle's lack of confidentiality would cost him the support of his own players.

He has also been criticised for his reliance on a faith-healer during the

tournament, while England defender Tony Adams has also criticised his methods. England were knocked out of the World Cup in the second round by Argentina.

Hoddle's position was weakened further by England's opening World Cup qualifier defeat by Sweden.

The way a furious Paul Ince reacted to his sending-off in Stockholm has raised questions about Hoddle's ability to discipline his players.

Hoddle's England future will be discussed next month when a special sub-committee will meet to decide whether or not to extend his contract to 2002.

TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA '1'	PHILADELPHIA '2'	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 1	GALLERIA 2	Hispano Theatre
	TEL: 4634144	TEL: 4634144	TEL: 5699238	TEL: 5677430	TEL: 934793	TEL: 934793	TEL: 4625155
	Sophie Marceau ... in Leo Tolstoy's ANNA KARENINA Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	NASSER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Comedian Adel Imam ... in AL ZA'EM Shows: 6:30, 9:30 Additional shows Thursday and Friday evenings at 12:30	CONCORD '1' NASSER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD '2' UP CLOSE & PERSONAL Shows: 3:30, 5:30 only	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria ARMAGEDDON Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:45	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria GREAT EXPECTATIONS Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45	WATCH OUT FOR THE NEW PLAY TERRORISM

